

DISCORR MAGAZINE

that couchant mag from CiTR 101.9 FM
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Dec-Jan 2025-26 / Vol.42 / No.5 // Issue #444

cover photo of Andrew Mbaruk by Isa You

editor's note

December — I don't like it when things change, either. More specifically, I don't like to notice time passing. Movement is sometimes like stillness: it feels the same if you let it hang around too long. So instead, we're all standing in this room. The room is a whole year. The room is a party. The party's arguments are wild-eyed, and its threads are faulty. It's always trying to claim that the temporary is permanent; it's always using the language of "forever." Songs about parties are always going "forever and ever" and "all night and every day." The truth is that every party is just a signpost. Outside of this room, time is pulling away from us. Dragging all things with it into some unlit horizon and all we ever want is for it to stop. This is why everyone online has to grandly talk about how old and uncool they are. This is why indie rock bands are reflexively labeled 'Dad Rock' if any of their members are over thirty — kids or not. But I also understand that making clumsy statements about being a million years old because you are twenty-seven is maybe a way to acknowledge that the passage of time is hard to metabolize. That the unyielding march of hours will shape you, and does more so every time you are made to look back.

This process, the way in which nothing stops, is not specific to being young and then getting older. It is not specific even to Vancouver, to good cafes that become slop-bowl chains or newer punk venues or galleries closing. It's a process of accumulation and disposal. We may try sometimes to stand still, but we are standing on a moving walkway — and December is full of shoulder checks, especially as a music fan. Every year *that* streaming platform comes up with a new way to goad users into posting their year-end data. It charts your top albums, and, new this year, your "listening age" based on the release date of the songs you listened to most, which has to be about as bullshit as their AI policy. Every year the music blogs roll out their sample set of top albums. Every year, we, the reverent listeners, compile our own.

But a party is a signpost. Instead of one giant, ceaseless river of time, you get this room. This party. You get finding the bathroom, clapping and whispering, making jokes about the dog, eating too much, hogging the aux. In a world where nothing stops, where there is always something else, I would choose the lie of the party any day. I would rather try and fail to stand still than to be fast and flat. And it goes on like this: maybe all your early signposts are gone, but every room offers a new one. Over and over. Again and again.

You think the epiphanies are over? You haven't read Jeff Lee's review of Richard Boulet at *Canton-sardine*. You haven't savoured the small file in Margo Baltzan's interview with *Smalll File Media Festival*. If that's not enough, new writer, Jeffrey Liu brings us the most deliberate and tangled review of *Wanderstop* — a game that refuses to be rushed.

To the slow texture of New Years,
~T

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THE INSANE WORLD OF COOLMATHGAMES

or some contributor bios of December-January 2025-26

GABRIEL BELL

Gabriel (he/him) is a history student from SoCal with a near-flawless record of listening to one new album every day for the last three years. Some of his favorite albums are Kendrick Lamar's *Mr. Morale and the Big Steppers*, Mulatu Astatke's *To Know Without Knowing*, and Jordi Savall's *Llibre Vermell de Montserrat*. Rumor has it his TikTok / Substack (@GabeCopperhand on both) are pretty great too, but who's to say...

KAIRN ZHOU

passionate about: webtools, Adventure Time, the growing season when accompanied by helping hands. @_kairning

SOPHIA FUNK

Illustrator and artist with a passion for cross-words, comics, and chrysanthemums. Can be found online not posting at @sophiafunky

MICHAEL YAP

I co-lead the Archives Collective with my cousin. This is not a case of nepotism, I promise. I'm currently re-listening to a lot of Sheena Ringo, Allman Brothers and King Gnu. Tune into CiTRChives!

ALICIA L'ARCHEVÊQUE

Alicia L'Archevêque is a sucker for writing short fiction/screenplays (until she hunts and gathers enough patience for longer forms). She dabbles in varsity swimming and dives headfirst into dancing to live music & writing Substack newsletters. She is so very happy to be here :)

ERICH DACHWITZ

Just a guy enthusiastic about local music.

LEXI FONTAINE

Lexi Fontaine is an indigenous two-spirit music fan born and raised in Vancouver B.C. She works at Red Gate Arts Society and spends her time searching for exciting new music releases and attending local indie shows.

DALIA CURRIE

Playwriting. Rollerskating. Townes Van Zandt. Reading James Baldwin. Not using spotify.

JEFF LEE

I'm a radio host at CiTR and Discorder Magazine, where I host a show called *LEEnin' with Jeff*. The show explores topics related to arts, culture, human interest stories, and community voices. I'm also a news reporter for The Ubysey and a graduate student at the UBC School of Journalism. Storytelling is at the heart of everything I do—I'm passionate about uncovering diverse perspectives, exploring the creative

process, and highlighting the people and ideas that shape our world. In my free time, you'll find me watching rom-coms, catching live theatre productions, spending time with my family, or enjoying a good cheeseburger.

DANI YOUR DARLING

propagandist, poet, and pomelo connoisseur. spectacle and spectator. solidarity is a verb! read! wear a well fitted respirator mask! free Palestine!

ZOË CLEMENTINE GELLER-ALFORD

Hello! Tall musical lady known for dancing in public and hugging a lot! Thank you for being here! I love you!

BYEONGHUN LEE

Cake!

SYLVIE AUDET

Enjoyer of pictures and the beach.

ISA YOU

Isa is a second-generation Chinese Canadian settler living on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. She takes photos and writes occasionally.

SOPHY

(bluerocketship.png) currently napping, reading, knitting.

MADY BONIFACE

Mady Boniface is a Media Studies student at UBC who is passionate about Illustration, sculpture, TV, film and social justice. Their favourite musician is Hozier and their favourite TV show is *Succession*. :)

MARGO BALTZAN

substack.com/@margoggles :)

MATT SCHMIDT

Matt is an indie filmmaker born in Port Alberni, BC. He has been writing for most of his life and has been an avid concert-goer since he was in the womb. His debut short film "The Space Left Behind" is slated to hit the festival circuit later this year.

CHIANNE CHUNG

Hi, I'm an illustrator for *Discorder* and a first year here at UBC from Hong Kong. When I'm not busy doing school, I spend most of my time reading, writing, taking photos and doing art. If you want to check out more of my stuff, its @dystopiannoise on Instagram... see you there.

KEELEY PETEL

I'm a media studies student and I love to do anything artsy! Most of my creative inspiration is rooted in my love for music. I enjoy creating little films with friends and I've done photography for quite some time, I truly adore it!

FRANCIS BILLIE CULLEN

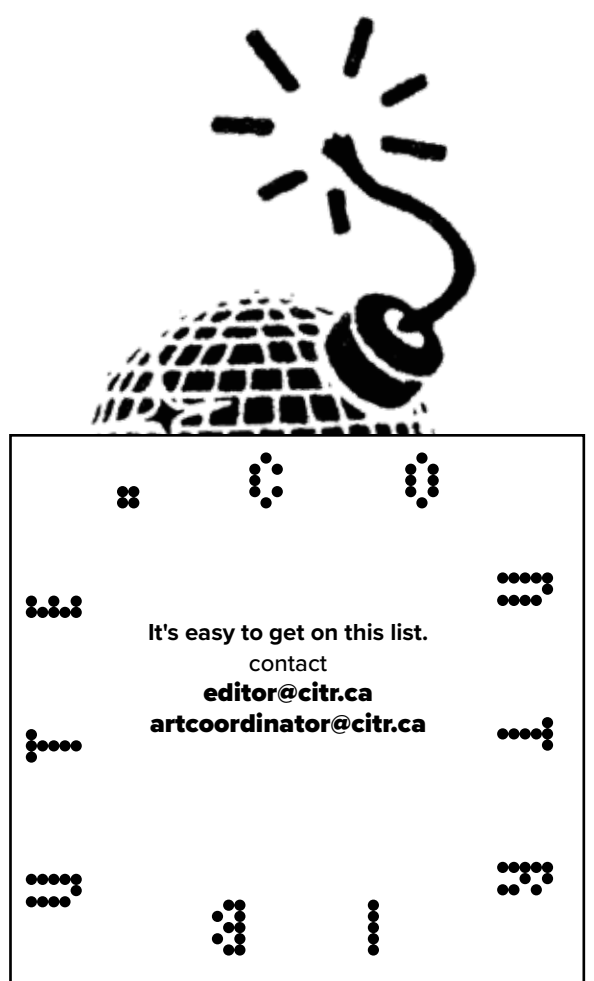
A multimedia artist writing a love letter to so-called Vancouver. Cullen maintains that "A Discorder a day keeps the doctor away."

SELENA SALLAY

Selena Sallay is a music enthusiast raised in Vancouver B.C. and currently has several published works for Ubysey's Humour section. In her spare time, she remains inspired by listening to new music, or attending various concerts as she is amazed by the live music scene.

EMILE ROBINSON

Seattle, WA



BEATS BLUES & BARS



WORDS BY MICHAEL YAP / PHOTO BY HAYDEN DELAMERE / ILLUSTRATIONS BY SILVIE AUDET

Beats Blues and Bars have stumbled upon something special and it's plain for all to see. With decades of experience between them, the group effortlessly blends rock, funk, R&B, soul, and hip-hop into something fresh and familiar all at once. Coming off their performances at the Fox Cabaret and Block Party, I interviewed the group to learn more about their background, their process, and what's next.

So you guys just released your new EP, *Idols of the Temple*. I wanted to know, how did Beats Blues and Bars come about?

K-Ski: Well, me and Maxi Theophile did a couple of projects, and we were working with K-Rec, and started doing shows. We recorded some music [and] shout out to Timmy Boombap, he told us about Noah. We brought Noah on, we were doing shows around the area, then after we had a break from shows, we were like, let's record *Idols Of The Temple*.

You guys mentioned earlier you [K-Ski and Maxi Theophile] have known each other for a long time?

Maxi Theophile: I've known Kevin for quite a few years. I've known him for, like...
K-S: 15 years. At least 15 years.

MT: But, we never really connected musically until about 8 years ago. He came up with a proposal, met up at a little coffee shop, discussed what his vision was, and we just started collaborating. I've known Kent [K-Rec] for probably close to 30 years. I think we started hanging out

when I was, like, 20. I was just starting to have an interest in guitar.

K-Rec: Well, that makes me feel old. It was definitely, like, in '99. Weren't you in a metal band at that time?

MT: No. That was '99. Metal band didn't come 'til 2007.

Wait. You were in a metal band?

MT: I started a couple metal bands, yeah. My first band was some sort of mellow, acoustic, like Simon and Garfunkel bullshit. And then all of a sudden, we got this bassist that just wanted to turn it heavier.

K-R: He put the funk in Garfunkel.

MT: He definitely did.

Noah Oryema: I picked up guitar when I was eight. The bass guitar was my first instrument. A week later, the guitar became my second instrument, I've been juggling the two since then. Just before joining this group, he mentioned Timmy Boombap. Yeah. I was in a jazz fusion group with him [and] we would play every week at the Osita. Timmy Boombap told me there's a band, you know, with you being a hip-hop junkie yourself and

the grooviness of your bass playing, I think you'd be very a good fit for these guys.

K-S: Well, I'm from the States. I was rapping since high school and upon graduating, I had a record contract offered, but my mom wouldn't sign it. She decided for me to go to the Navy. I was in the Navy for twelve years and when I got out, I started doing music down in Seattle. Then, I got signed to an independent record label, and got 2003 Seattle *Artist of the Year*. We were being scouted by major record labels, but I decided to take a break, raise my kids. I was going through a separation and eventually divorced, and then I fell in love with a Canadian and then moved. So, I've been rapping since '85, it's been 40 years [since] I first started picking up a pen trying to be LL Cool J.

This record's such a mishmash of different styles. The scratching on there feels like a 90s boom-bap record and you said you wanted to be like LL Cool J. But some songs also feel like Black Messiah or Funkadelic — so what were your influences going into this record?

K: Well, my background is Public Enemy, KRS-One, Poor Righteous Teachers, Wu-Tang, Nas — MCs that talk about certain things. That era.

NO: I like to think of it as like, I have like a pot and these different styles that I extract from my mental music library, and I just stir it. I take from the pot what is suitable for a specific song that we do.

MT: Personally, I've never really been a hip-hop head. Most of the stuff that I come up with on guitar is based on blues, soul, funk, and rock and roll. All that stuff, Otis Redding, you know, a bit of Elvis, but not really. Sharon Jones, Bill Withers.



As the poor ones die

K-R: I would say, [our] sound is Paul [Maxi Theophile] and Kevin [K-Ski]. Paul coming from his side of being more rock [and] blues, and Kevin being straight up hip-hop. Me and Noah just add the flavor.

K-S: Mhmm. The seasoning. Yes.

MT: The Cajun Mix. Yeah.

NO: We're the gray area.

K-R: Yeah. We're like the dirty bathwater.

I'm very curious about the songwriting process. How does it usually come about?

MT: I'll get some sort of melody or idea. I'll come up with a riff or come up with a rhythm and just play it and I'll be like, 'Hey, I got this idea, here are some of the lyrics.' I'll send it off to them [and] K. Frost comes in like, 'I've got bars for that.'

K-S: I've been doing it for like 40 years. I'm always writing even when I wasn't recording. I'm always writing. That's just been me since I was 15 years old. I'm constantly writing. My wife can't throw paper away in the house. There's bars on that baby! If I hear a beat, I lock it in my head and the lyrics start coming to me. I might start off with a bar, then I add another bar, then I add another bar. So by the time I get home, my wife is like, 'Hey, baby!' I'm like, 'I love you, I gotta go write before I lose it!'

MT: 'Stop talking to me!'

K-S: There's been times when Paul'd send a text and be like, 'yo, here's a loop' and then, you know, with me, the words start coming. Whether it's a beat, or [KR] scratches something that fits the song, you know, it all starts with Paul having this riff in his head and we just kinda add on.

MT: I think one of the things that makes it easy and fun is that there's not a lot of ego. I would say I'm the one with the biggest ego — just because I want it to sound perfect — but I never tell them where to go and how to do it. You guys do whatever you want, let's just make it.

K-S: I think it's the respect. We respect what each other brings to the table. Like you're saying, Paul with the blues and the rock, Noah comes with the bass, K-Rec, whether he's chopping up a beat or he's scratching, it's just a real collaborative effort.

K-Ski, you have this solo track called "USS Midway, CV-41" that talks about your experience in the Navy. I'm curious about that since the lyrics for your songs are political, was being in the Navy a big part of that?

K-S: My first duty station was on [an] aircraft carrier. So at 18 years old, I'm in the middle of the ocean in the bottom of the ship in the storeroom, and my music is Public Enemy, Brand Nubian, Poor Righteous Teachers, KRS-One. I'm getting that information and I'm going to the library because I'm researching what I'm hearing, and that kinda shaped my outlook. When I was signed to the label in Seattle, I was trying to play both. You know, trying to serve two masters. I had the club joints but [on] the next one, I'm trying to be political. I just had to take a step back and find my voice. After taking a break, I was like, 'You know what? If I get back in,

I'm just going to be me.' I like to write lyrics that talk about real things, what we're going through, because I'm blue-collar — I've been working in supply chain for 35 years, so I know stuff that we go through as workers. But also, I come from the school of Slick Rick, so I can storytell, I can talk about relationships, I can talk about politics. That's what I wanted to do on *Idols of The Temple*, a couple songs that was a little different. That's why I like 'Seductive,' where it seems like I'm talking about a female who is deceiving — but I'm actually talking about this physical world that we live in and how deceptive it is by nature.

K-Rec and Noah Oryema: Bars. Bars.

I really enjoyed the EP, and you're planning for this to be a trilogy? Can you guys give away anything about what ties all of it together?

K-S: So *Idols of The Temple* is about the false idols we worship. Ego, status, money, material things. The next project, we're thinking about calling it *Thieves in The Shadows*. It's the things that rob us of our self-worth. So it's geared upon looking within, and understanding you had this greatness, and that part of you being great is going through trials and tribulations.

So you guys recently played the Fox Cabaret and the Block Party, and you're playing at Hendrix House soon for Hogan's Alley Society. What's next for the band?

K-S: New project. Hopefully early 2026. We wanna do more shows and get into some festivals. Maybe a little tour around the area and see where it goes from there.

K-R: We're gonna try to do openings for hip-hop shows. But, yeah, I think just pushing in 2026? I've just seen the momentum growing and growing, and it's good to capitalize on it. Anyway, my plan is just to keep on recording because I like making music, so I'm gonna push to keep making new projects. [If] these guys are willing. I'm down.

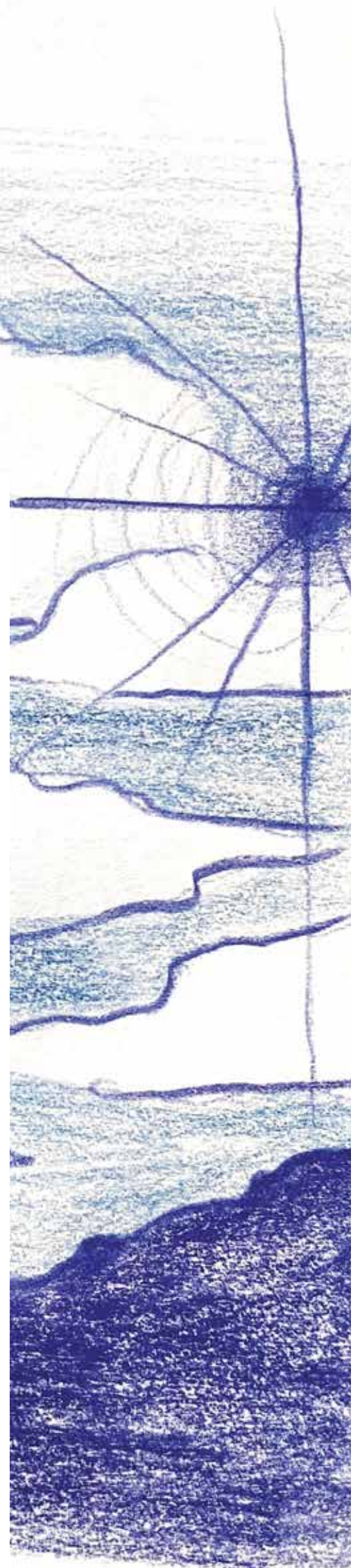
MT: I would say for 2026, our goal is to write as much music as possible. Get on to some bigger shows and have our momentum go even further. That's the goal.

K-R: Also, I feel like the way the world's going, it's a perfect opportunity for our message.

MT: I think the reason why we reach a lot of people is because we do play that '90s kinda, 'hey, I'm gonna dance to this' music. But at the same time, it'll catch you in different ways. Kind of soul, a little bit of hip-hop, a little bit rock, it's just the right combination of music that catches everybody who's interested in just music itself.

K-S: I like to call our music, 'food for the spirit.'

MT: Y'all are gonna make me cry. Come on. Come on. Smarten up! ©





words by margo baltzan
photos by keeley petel
illustrations by francis billie cullen

The Small File Media Festival features Small-File Ecomedia, movies compressed at a rate of 1.44 MB per minute, showing that great cinema doesn't have to mean great big files. This lo-fi intervention draws from both DIY movements and computer-based artistic practices.

Fixelated shots of animal carcasses, casually sprawled on a typical beach setting. Blown-up saturation, turquoise blues and flamingo pinks. An unassuming honky-tonk tune scores this sub-2-minute film. It is playful, dismal, Tumblr-reminiscently weird: you are watching a small file film. To be exact, you are watching the first instalment of the Doomer Trilogy, three films made by Nanaimo artists Amber and Matthew Fox, created for and screened at the 2022 Small File Media Festival.

“We have been exposed to a dangerous amount of small files,” Joey Malbon, Programming Director of the SFMF joked when I spoke to him and the festival’s Managing Director, Dr. Yani Kong, this past November. “It is an overwhelming experience, because small files demand attention, especially when you put [them] in a cinema situation.” Since 2020, SFMF has curated and showcased a selection of small media for curious viewers, in all the evolving genre’s forms.

Perhaps a dear reader may wonder; what, exactly, is a small file? Definitionally, it is any media file that travels at a bitrate of 1.44 MB per minute—a small fraction of standard video, which is between 60 and 350 megabytes per minute. More jagged in their visual and auditory qualities, small file films are often much more visually granular, saturated, and sensorially unpredictable than higher-resolution media. It is perhaps the aesthetic uniqueness of small file media, along with its potential as an environmental intervention—“as an art that works”—that has drawn Managing Director Dr. Yani Kong into SFMF’s orbit.

As SFU alumni, both Malbon and Kong trace the roots of their respective engagement with SFMF to the festival’s founder, Dr. Laura U. Marks, a scholar of

new media and professor at the School for the Contemporary Arts at SFU. Malbon himself was involved in the festival’s genesis back in 2020. In search of a project that would amplify research on the environmental impacts of media streaming, Dr. Marks had inquired with Malbon, then a graduate student, about the possibility of making a film at one megabyte per minute. And, well, “turns out you could!” says Malbon. Having now just wrapped up its sixth in-person and online festival, which included a sold-out screening at the Cinematheque, the SFMF continues to showcase small file talent from all over the world. The 2025 festival notably included films from workshops held in Cairo, Mexico City, Dhaka, home-sweet-home Vancouver, as well as an animation school in Tehran.

But, but, but! Why the small files? Bad news: media consumption, at its current normalized volume and high-definition quality, is not weightless—media streaming is calculated to contribute a surprising 1% of global greenhouse gases. All the infrastructure that allows for media streaming—data centers, networks, and devices that store and transmit media—requires energy to function. About 79% of global electricity comes from fossil fuels. Ergo, an implicated carbon footprint. Small files, in turn, carry a much smaller footprint by virtue of their reduced size. One of SFMF’s main aims is to combat “streaming impact denial,” the belief that online media does not possess any material repercussions. Through promoting more environmentally friendly forms of media, the festival hopes to push back against our cultural inclination toward greater and greater consumption patterns. That said, Kong gently corrected my initial assumption that the merit of small files is solely due to their potential as an environmental intervention. While their eco-medium informs the content of some

small file films, others are interested in exploring the unique medium for its own artistic sake. “What we have challenged artists to do is to make a really visually appealing film and also experiment with different, more accessible forms of cinema,” explains Kong. Malbon highlighted the idea that fidelity—the degree of exactness to which a video represents reality—is a privilege. Artists lose something when working within the small file medium, but also gain something too. Loss of fidelity can open up other possibilities. “I guess the joy is in seeing what happens,” says Malbon. Ultimately, Kong considers SFMF to be an artist-led festival; their team facilitates the space and provides a particular set of parameters. In turn, artists push the emerging genre forward in funky and thoughtful ways.

Noted. Inherently oblique, perhaps foreign to a typical media palette, small files demand a little more of their audiences. So who, exactly, is the intended audience for these films? Malbon and Kong recognize a tension between the desire to cherish the

punk-niche aesthetic of the genre and the desire to appeal to, and therefore reach, a broader audience. Kong is charitable; “we are asking a lot of our audience.” Small file films are much more intensely visual and often lacking the narrative structure present in traditional films. Trying out something new, the 2025 festival year included a commissioned narrative feature-length small file — produced by the Liam and Will Riley — the first of its kind for SFMF. Malbon notes a certain “internet-feeling” to the festival, perhaps due to the technologies used, perhaps due to the artist repertoire that the festival happens to draw out. The result is an experience of something that at its surface is perhaps novel, yet simultaneously familiar in its undertones: perceptually, it feels new, but once audiences get into the reverie of the whole thing, “you’re in, you are in the small file mode, and you are just having a good time,” says Malbon.

Nonetheless, I agree with Kong and Malbon that small files require a more intentional, and therefore more demanding, viewing experience. Having initially planned to watch a couple films graciously shared



with me by SFMF, I opened my laptop one late night in search of something to idly consider. *Crapper* (2024) by Garcia Pablo greeted me instead. Six pixelated minutes of an exploration of what, exactly, constitutes the experience of a toilet refused to act as a remedial diversion. Bored at first, soon amused, then impatient for more, I watched the film slightly squinting. Garcia's film made me consider the relationship between me and the screen; it made my viewing experience salient. I liked *Crapper*. Kong's reflection on the magical quality of small files—that they give you a “reason to look for longer,” a desire to “wait patiently and seek out the message”—has begun to ring true for me.

uch intentional attention, as necessitated or appreciating small file art, is perhaps crucial for broader media literacy as well. The SFMF's official blurb online includes the claim that “our festival challenges media makers to intervene in the 4K dystopia of bandwidth imperialism.” As an intervention, small files aim to provide an alternative mode of media consumption, one that exists “outside of the boundaries” of big media streaming corporations, which themselves involve a plethora of surveillance infrastructures. Malbon and Kong note more tactical uses of small files: as a form of discreet information dissemination, often used in places under siege or under intense governmental surveillance. At their core, then, small files are a means for autonomous information transmission. What's more, Malbon situates small files within a broader resurgence of older analog forms of media; the trend itself perhaps a larger backlash against modern digital streaming. Whereas digital streaming—veiled in its functioning—provides seamless, endless (mindless?) consumption possibilities, older media forms such as DVDs and vinyl are much more transparent about how they function, what their limits are, what the piece of technology has endured. Yani likens Small File's exposure of its own infrastructure to the modernist theatrical intervention of exposing the fourth wall. Small files are perhaps that “lifting of the curtain” when it comes to media; their grittiness and unintentional flaws all remind viewers of the existence of the media piece itself, what it took to come into being, its eventual erosion as a material entity.

“This is the intervention in that it's not always pretty,” says Malbon. “It's not supposed to be something that you don't pay attention to—you do pay attention to it; you may hate a small file, but you are still thinking about a small file. It is eliciting a response.” In other words, small files do not allow for indifference—to the art piece itself, and perhaps even to the material and environmental processes that underpin it. Kong notes that the questions of why, and whether, art ought to respond to anything political or environmental are ones still actively debated by their team. For herself, SFMF is about “putting something you want to see out in the world” in the hopes of positively adding to the pile of things from which individuals can choose. It is not poised as a replacement or catch-all solution to the environmental impacts of digital streaming. It is an option, one that aims to provide a lasting awareness and sense of intentionality when consuming media. “I want to watch some things in 4K,” Malbon exclaims, “but not everything.” Conscientiousness when it comes to media consumption, rather, is the intended goal.

And importantly! When it comes to media literacy, no line ought to be drawn at the side of consumption. Beyond promoting an appreciation for alternate media forms, SFMF aims to highlight the power of DIY. The SFMF team runs a multitude of workshops that teach the fundamentals of small file film creation. Currently, they are mainly post-secondary**, but Malbon spoke of a specific workshop he ran at Richmond Art Center, during which folks who had never picked up a camera before were making something—and loving it. “It is not just about small file media making, it's any kind of media making,” says Malbon. “There is something freeing about it... Where does the media we consume come from? How is it made?” Currently, the SFMF team is also working on developing workshop modules that educators themselves can co-opt and use to teach their own classes. One's own ability to engage in the creative process is a real and achievable affair.

I asked Malbon and Kong where they wanted to see SFMF in five years' time. Malbon lit up, stating a hopeful desire for a Small File roadshow: “big screenings in multiple different cities.” Why? Small files, in all their finite pixelated glory, are best experienced on the big screen. Kong proposed her own “pipe-dreamy” idea—occupying a prestigious film festival, in the hopes of sharing the avant-garde genre with many via its juxtaposition with traditional film. The duo's aspirations intertwine: to share the bewildering and ever-evolving world of small file media. But until then, where can folks find a little itty-bitty small file? SFMF's team has recently introduced Small-File TV, a platform on their website that allows viewers to watch small files in their original intended format. In true small file spirit, folks can also go ahead and make their own! Duh! Perhaps the experiences of creation and consumption ought not to be so chasmically distinct. The tools and weird vibes are all around! Take a look for yourself. ©



ANDREW MBARUK

WORDS BY DALIA CURRIE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SOPHY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ISA YOU



It was a rainy night, and I was waiting anxiously for the 99 B-line in wet sneakers when I decided to put on *self-portrait*, the first track of Andrew Mbaruk's and WET-JET SEYMOURS album *Blackout*. The beat squeezed through my waterlogged wire headphones, heavy and orchestral, vaguely reminiscent of MF Doom — who Andrew happened to cite during our conversation as a creative inspiration. Andrew's lyrics can only be described as poetry. He stacks each syllable carefully upon the last, building a lexical mosaic of intertextuality and slant rhyme, his voice is deep and unhurried, like the slow creak of an old wooden door. On that rainy night, staring down East Broadway into a stream of blinding LED headlights (fuck Elon Musk) I let the music pull me under, and by the third track, "schizoschizophreniaphrenia," Andrew's lyrics have submerged me completely "Roses flashing their pink petals —" Andrew raps. "to the poet standing here in his sandals / among the thorny flowers smiling / his tongue swarming with a thousand eyes."

I meet Andrew at an East Van coffee shop on an overcast afternoon. The musician/poet is wearing chunky black rainboots, and his afro peeks out from under a dark brown newsboy cap. We sat at a window table, surrounded by the smell of ground coffee, and the chatter of older men gathered for pastries and a gossip session. As a creative writing major who is always haphazardly attempting new genres, I was excited to find that beyond music, Andrew has published huge amounts of written poetry. Early into the conversation I ask Andrew why he focuses on the genres he does, and how he feels they differ.

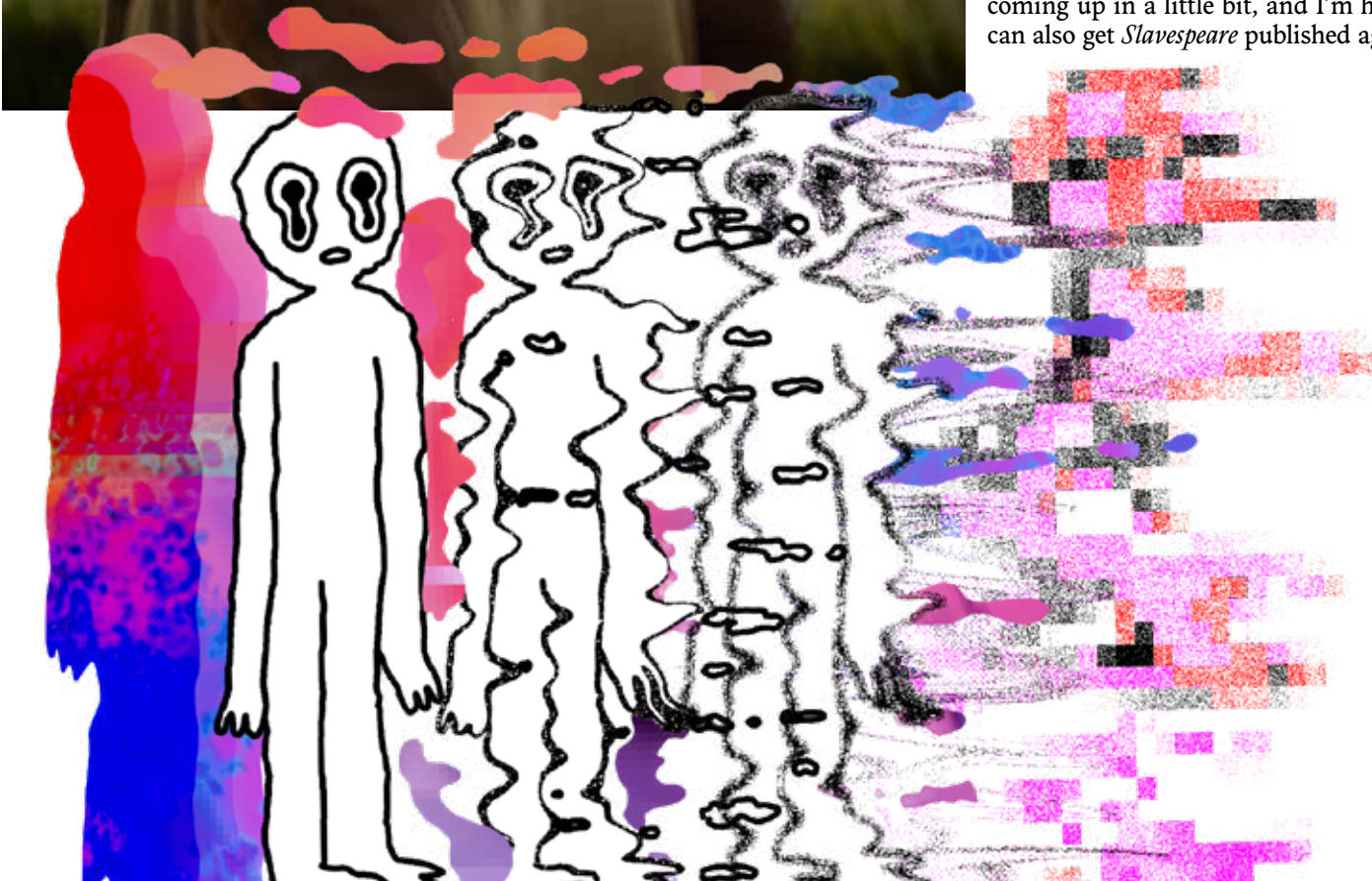
"[rap] is like poetry," Andrew says, his distinctive voice pushing over the sharp whirr of espresso machines. "It's exactly like poetry, actually. Some stuff rhymes a lot, some doesn't. Some of it has more complex schemes. Other rap doesn't. The crucial thing is that, with poetry, I remove anything that's extraneous, or I try to [...] Whereas in rap, I'm way more willing to say something elaborately, for the sake of saying it elaborately, and put in words just for the meter. A lot of stuff is there for the fun of it, not for the point or image," he pauses, "I'm really enjoying doing raps, but I have a book coming up in a little bit, and I'm hoping I can also get *Slavespeare* published again."

Slavespeare is an Early Modern English epic poem written by Andrew. Currently, it is two hundred and twenty-two pages spanning three self-published books, and it's still growing.

"It's about slavery and themes of slavery," Andrew tells me, "but the approach is kind of like Ezra Pound's 'The Cantos.' So it's fragments, but there's a thematic logic that makes it all, hopefully, coherent. [...] Then, I have a book called *The Negro Tree*, that is going to be published before the end of this year. If I could figure out a way to just publish poetry, to only do that, that's what I would do. Books take way longer. It's not as fun. I like putting things out right away, and that's what rap has been able to offer. I hope that my stuff can work without the music [...] but it doesn't always. Because the raps have a lot of, like I said, extraneous words, unnecessary things, so it's a bit more free. It's fuller — the music. I feel like I'm more fully expressing myself," he pauses to think, "objectively, this book of short poems [*Negro Tree*] is way more serious. It's better stuff. It's stuff that I am probably more proud of." Something distinct about Andrew's written work is how strongly the reader can hear his voice through the page. As a writer, I know how difficult it is to capture this sense of orality, and I am curious how he achieves it. "Denise Levertov has some really crucial essays on enjambment and lines, and how to write poetry. She's influenced by the *Projective Verse Poets*."

I admit that I don't know much about *Projective Verse*, and he sets into explanation with fervor: "Charles Olson wrote an essay called *Projective Verse*. It's a completely original, American way of thinking about poetics where the line is determined by your breath — *how* you say things. Everyone has a different line because they breathe differently. And the way you present the words on the page is supposed to be kind of a score sheet — similar to music — of how it would be said when you say it aloud. I'm trying to [write in a way that] a reader would be able to figure out what I'm doing, but if it's something where it's completely dependent on how I'm going to say it, and there's just no way to make it clear on the page, then I'll put it in a rap."

The conversation drifts through some of Andrew's musical inspiration, with me greedily gobbling up recommendations of Das Racist, MC Paul Barman, BbyMutha,





and Das EFX. As we talk about the start of Andrew's rapping career, which came after poetry around 2017, he casually mentions that he has invented a form of rapping which he calls *Rhyme Chiasmus*.

"Chiasmus," he says, articulating every corner of the word with the same intensity I recognize from his music, "it's from a rhetorical device, something like, 'ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.' Where 'country' and 'you' are being inverted — 'Country. You. You. Country.' I do that instead with the *sounds* of words, that's why I call it Rhyme Chiasmus," he laughs, "When I [came up with] Rhyme Chiasmus I was trying to get everyone to write like that [...] but I do have a lot of structureless rhymes, especially from 2018 to 2022."

As we both become cozier, now three quarters of the way through our lattes, I ask Andrew how long he has been producing his beats. "I was doing that the whole time, but it wasn't good for a while. When I started I was trying to do these lo-fi rock beats [...] I would take drums from a track, I'd steal them, so it was real drums always, but just like, the sound of the snare and the kick. Then I would beatbox into a microphone, record that for the beat. I'd take the drum sounds and paste them underneath the beatboxing waves. Then I'd loop the drums without the beatboxing, so the drums have this kind of organic rhythm — similar to beatboxing, but they sound like real drums. I'd usually record the guitar with a distortion pedal. The guitar is really monotonous, I would play it just in a continuous loop, the whole track. Very boring. I used to have a bass guitar, so that's how I was doing it for years. But lately I've been using a sampler in *BandLab*, so now I'm playing my guitar on a pad." I ask Andrew how many instruments he knows how to play and he laughs; "I really don't know how to play any instruments [...] I'm good at making it sound like I know how to play instruments."

This year Andrew released 47 tracks of self-produced music called *Andy*. His lo-fi rock origins can be heard in the instrumentals of tracks like "Praxistentialism" and "Green Leaves, Blue Sky." The entire album is heightened with intense crepitation and pulsing between the right and left speaker, which creates the listening sensation of being dragged across gravel in a windstorm,

in the best possible way. Andrew's lyrics are musical in themselves, pulsing in rhythm and pitch along with the beats: "The only truth is words don't respect the world, nor what we feel" Andrew raps on the title track, "Turning as if the earth's form were spherical / Words only connect to words; they form a mirror." I highly recommend checking out *Andy* on Andrew's Bandcamp, as he says in the album description, it is: "the best, and probably the final, self-produced Andrew Mbaruk rap album."

As our lattes are reduced to patches of beige milk-foam at the bottom of our cups, I pose the question of whether apolitical art exists. "Neutrality is a political position. It's a conservative political position," he states, "I like a lot of art that seems apolitical. It's all white art. Like John Ashbery. Ashbery is an incredible poet. He's a genius. No one has a vocabulary like his, or his ability to do so many things at the same time to create a synthesis. But he has no interest in anything that isn't like, white and bourgeois. He just can't say anything about Black America. He has nothing to say about anything. And also, on the issue of political art, the thing that's just foremost in my mind is that it's just impossible as a Black person to do art that isn't political. You can try to divorce yourself from your art. I tried to do [that in] *Oiseau=textual*, the flying rap album."

I ask Andrew to talk more about *Oiseau=textual*, and he takes off in explanation of not one, but a series of projects. It started, it seems, with the spoken word album *Phono=textual*, which was released in 2016. Then *Neuro=textual*, which he calls "a novel of ideas that's a rap album," and he tells me it is the first of the textual projects where he really thought about it. He further explains the projects come as a reference to Derrida's concepts of textuality, which states that everything is text, because writing is important to Derrida's philosophy. After *Neuro=textual* he reaches *Oiseau=textual*, which he tells me is an album that explores the ancient way of looking at birds as signs. After that came *Hydro=textual*, *Bi=textual*, *Nycto=textual*, and *Cosmo=textual*. As he explains the projects, it becomes clear that he doesn't allow language or genre to confine his work.

"So *Nycto=Textual* is produced by WET-JET SEYMOUR," He says. "Nycto means night — nocturnal. And it's set in Queens. It's actually a novel. Very abstract. It's about a

clerk; a young black male clerk working a night shift at a bodega in Queens. It's all about night, near the ocean in Rockaway Beach. So the image of waves at night, against the beach, and an owl — he has a friend who visits him with an owl. This calls back to *Oiseau=textual*. Yeah, it's all nocturnal shit. That's one of my favorite projects. Very cool."

After nearly two hours, we drop our mugs in the cafe bus bin and head our separate ways into gray afternoon. During the walk home, dodging puddles, I untangled my wire headphones once again to listen to my favourite of Andrew's albums, *Weirdward*. As I thought about our conversation, there was one thing Andrew had said that really stuck with me as a writer. It was a simple piece of advice, but it showed so much about Andrew, and his philosophy around language.

"Reading dictionaries is really useful," Andrew had said. "If you have a terrible life, just nothing to do, you can just read the dictionary. If life is boring anyway, you might as well read encyclopedias and dictionaries, not only will it increase vocabulary but there's often the etymologies in there too. Sometimes you can write an entire poem, just from a little bit of the definition — not even the word — but just a few words in the definition can be interesting on their own." ©

WANDERSTOP

words by Jeffrey Liu
illustrations by Sophia Funk

The culmination of seven years of development, *Wanderstop* is the third release from Vancouver-based game designer Davey Wreden. A self-proclaimed cozy game, it inherits the open-ended gameplay and colorful palette of genre cornerstones *Animal Crossing* and *Stardew Valley*. You play as Alta, a career fighter who made a name for herself by holding an undefeated record for years in gladiator-style arena melees. After breaking her victory streak, she reassesses her approach to training as she attributes the slip-up to inadequate discipline. Seeking guidance, she enters a mystical forest in search of a legendary warrior who resides within. During her journey, she experiences an unprecedented fatigue that forces her to temporarily forfeit her quest. She finds refuge at a tea shop and is compelled to reconcile her life of violence with the delicacy and nurturing required to maintain the shop's daily operations.

As with any of Wreden's work, this game is not so simple. Initially intent on making films, Wreden reluctantly deferred his efforts to game design as he believed the medium of film to be too mature to allow for true experimentation. His first game, *The Stanley Parable*, began as a side project while pursuing a bachelor's in critical studies at the University of Southern California. Initially a mod for Valve's timeless *Half-Life 2*, Wreden continuously expanded the project's scope over the course of four years.

The Stanley Parable is responsible for the emergence of the "walking simulator" as a bona fide video game genre, transcending the expectations of its tongue-in-cheek label. In it, players assume the role of Stanley — a happily cubicle-kept employee working in a nondescript corporate high-rise. One unassuming day, Stanley reports to the office to find none of his colleagues present. As he explores the eerie monotony of the office, his investigation is commented by an endearingly

snarky narrator. Without a points system, inventory, map, or any of the usual implements, players are guided by the narrator's instructions. Early in the game, players reach a hallway with two doors. "At the doors, Stanley went left," the narrator divines. It is at the player's discretion whether or not to trust the narrator's nebulous intentions.

Wreden's lack of programming expertise means *The Stanley Parable* is defined by his technical constraints. Outsourcing feature implementations beyond his abilities, Wreden stuck by his guns and concentrated on writing and creative direction. He cites David Foster Wallace as a significant source of inspiration, embedding *Infinite Jest*'s nihilistic search for meaning deep within the witty writing of *The Stanley Parable*. The game's simplicity results in an experience of unparalleled elegance — a silent protagonist locked in a power struggle with an increasingly existential narrator as players respond through movement alone. Its undivided focus on narrative in lieu of flashy sequences marked it as a standout experience from an otherwise saturated indie scene.

The mainstream video game industry took notice of Wreden's work. *The Stanley Parable* received nominations at numerous international award ceremonies — the BAFTAs, Golden Joystick, and DICE among them. Earning the audience award at the *Independent Games Festival* served as its crowning achievement. By any metric, it was an incredible success; A game with a minuscule development team sharing the stage with titles backed by regiments of support staff. It is the underdog story that brought Wreden into the spotlight as indie gaming's unlikely golden boy.

An accomplishment of this caliber at 24 naturally sparked questions of "what's next?". Inquiring a younger Wreden would have yielded a clear answer — he envisaged *The Stanley Parable* to be his foot in the door at Valve. Lauded for their free-form approach to game development, it was the environment that he imagined would be most hospitable to his talents. Now, having experienced the process of developing and shipping *The Stanley Parable* from beginning-to-end, he thinks otherwise. In a text document hidden within the game files, Wreden writes, "I started out with career ambitions; this game killed most of them. If you're starting out, do not try to create something as ambitious as this by yourself. You will burn out and crash hard."

In the months following the game's release, Wreden went AWOL. Speculation about his inactivity on online discussion boards and forums ran rampant. He was the savant, a one-man team capable of turning water into wine. Perhaps his next project would be far grander in scale, something that necessitated a monk-like seclusion to conjure into existence.

Breaking the silence in a blog post, Wreden revealed he had spent months isolated from the outside world — leaving home only when necessary, and barely speaking to anybody. He reflected on the status of *The Stanley Parable* as indie game of the year, omitting the fanfare as he describes the debilitating consequences of the attention it received. Ultimately, he became numb to validation, even as his craving for it deepened. After releasing the game, he felt as if it were no longer his, losing sight of the ambitions that motivated him. Comments and criticisms from others usurped his perception of the game and disassembled its sacred status. *The Stanley Parable*, a project that defined four years of his life, had been defiled by critical reception and Wreden found himself without meaning.

He entered therapy to settle his turbulence. Searching for an outlet, he turned to the medium he knows best. Wreden quietly began work on a project that would become *The Beginner's Guide*.

Released two years after *The Stanley Parable*, *The Beginner's Guide* is another walking simulator with a narrator following a silent protagonist. In a Charlie Kaufman-style twist, Wreden wrote himself into the game. The narrator, voiced by him, introduces himself as 'Davey.' He walks the player through a whimsical environment created by Coda, a fictional game developer whom Davey befriends and idolizes. Consumed by his fascination with Coda's atypical gamecraft, the player witnesses Davey overstep boundaries in the pursuit of deducing some secret to Coda's brilliance.

It's no secret that *The Beginner's Guide* parallels his experience creating *The Stanley Parable*. Wreden's obsessive work ethic resulted from a desire to escape a cycle of depressive and dissociative thought loops.

Reflecting on this in an interview with *The New Yorker*, Wreden writes: "I thought that if I made a game that spits in the face of an attempt to find meaning in the world, that it would somehow map onto me, as a real person, and I would get over my fear of meaninglessness in the world. And it did not work."

His complete immersion in the development of *The Stanley Parable* came at the cost of personal relationships. Wreden's hunt for meaning left him emptier than before and these failures are mirrored in *The Beginner's Guide*.

A segment within the game has the player trapped in a domestic scene, endlessly straightening pillows and making a bed. While Coda intended it to peacefully loop ad infinitum, Wreden grows frustrated with the monotony and breaks it, allowing the player to exit. Wreden has since stated this segment took inspiration from a relationship he was unable to be present in. In one ending, the constant push-and-pull between Coda and Wreden comes to a head as the otherwise benign Coda eventually snaps at Wreden

— "When I'm around you, I feel physically ill." This dialogue is quoted verbatim from Wreden's best friend during the development of *The Stanley Parable*.

The Beginner's Guide was well-received, though its reception mattered little to Wreden. From starting *The Stanley Parable* in 2009 to shipping *The Beginner's Guide* in 2016, Wreden worked non-stop. Exhausted and burnt-out, he put game development aside to cultivate the inner peace that eluded him. In a profile for *The New York Times*, he revealed that he drew for upwards of five hours a day for six months, creating the same scene each time: a landscape of a lush forest with a clearing that gives way to an eccentric tea shop.

That year, Wreden collaborated with *Gone Home* game designer Karla Zimonja and *Minecraft* soundtrack composer C418 to establish a game studio. The studio, *Ivy Road*, began to give life to Wreden's sketches soon thereafter.

Wanderstop's development was overseen by a mature Wreden. Now 37, he has shaken his rebellious streak and spurned his convention of genre-breaking titles to create a title that is easily recognizable as a video game. This is no walking simulator — the player sows and harvests tea, brewing it to serve customers of the shop. Wreden's nonconformism is more subtle this time around, it may take players a while to realize that there are no numbers involved in *Wanderstop's* gameplay. There is nothing to level up and certainly nothing to earn; interactions with customers are rewarded with dialogue instead of currency. This is Wreden's vision of a 'cozy game'; completely eliminating the late-game grind of existing titles, as even *Stardew Valley* devolves into a resource-management routine. With no incentive to work for, players are forced to stop and smell the roses.

Even so, by no means does the game feel aimless. Through speaking to the eclectic customers and the amicable shopkeeper Boro, players are exposed to the psyche of the reserved and standoffish Alta. As she comes to terms with her burnout, she

struggles to find meaning in the day-to-day. Missions are replaced with meandering as she learns to reject a goal-focused lifestyle in favor of deliberate rest.

Alta's attitudes will resonate with those who are all too familiar with the results-focused mindset prevalent in North American society. Wreden conveys the lessons he learned from dealing with the corruptions of his ambitions through Alta's refusal to accept rest. The consequences of her inflexibility are encountered every step of the way, with Boro providing sincere and unambiguous advice that can often be boiled down to *relax*. Despite its candid message, *Wanderstop* comfortably avoids patronizing players through Wreden's knack for creating eccentric, yet sympathetic, characters. This is especially true for Alta, whose writing was informed by his failure to integrate the very lesson he imparts in *Wanderstop*.

A recurring theme within the game is the lack of conflict resolution. Customers arrive at the shop with various afflictions, both physical and mental. In a fantasy world where tea can taste like your favorite breakfast cereal or cause drinkers to belt out in song, there is an assumption that there exists some elixir capable of healing the NPCs you inevitably become attached to. In most cases though, you can provide relief but never resolution — it is up to them to find the remedies they seek. Alta herself experiences an episode in which she begs others for help, before ultimately realizing that there is no shortcut to healing. Likewise, Wreden continued to struggle with managing burnout and was doomed to repeat the cycle so long as he worked on *Wanderstop*. There is no substitution for rest.

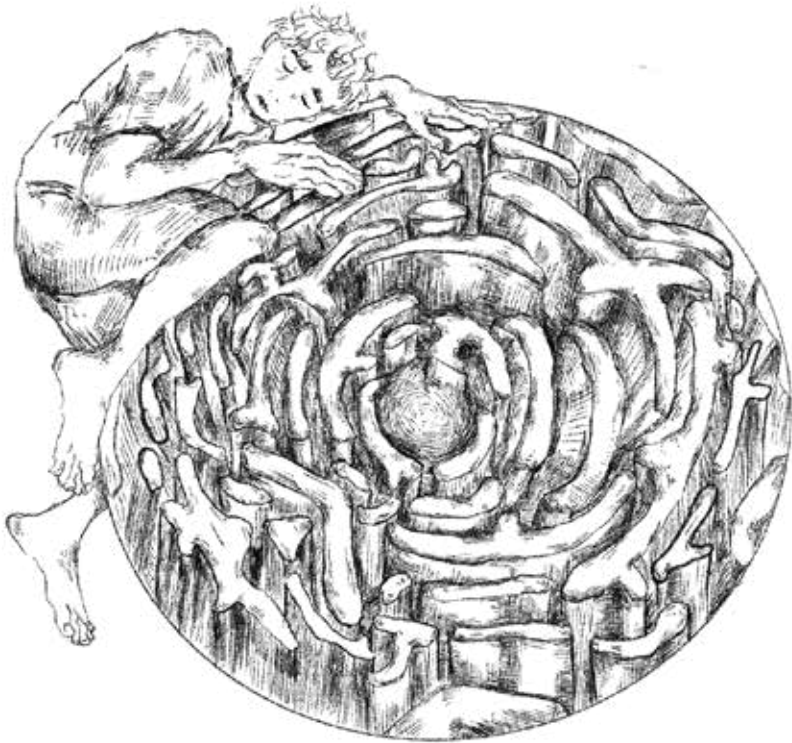
Wanderstop establishes Wreden as a creative martyr — stating in an interview, "I started out trying to make this game in a way that it wasn't going to be a complex story about me and my life, and I failed to do that." He is outspoken in his disdain for the demands of the modern game industry, and yet he braves another development cycle to ship a product, implicitly asking players 'to do as I say and not

as I do.' This time around, Wreden's story is not concealed through some meta-narrative, as if pleading with the player to witness his story once and for all.

As someone juggling chronic anxiety fed by unconstrained ambitions as a student, I cannot understate the subtle joys of this game. It is by no means a miraculous replacement for therapy; but it is a charming game with playful art direction, filled with delightful diversions from reality. For three weeks, *Wanderstop* supplanted my habit of unwinding by playing *Trackmania*, a competitive racer that frustrates me too often to be considered leisure. Freed from my ambitions that have seeped into my downtime, it was pleasant to take a break from taking a break. While I have returned to my quest of breaking into *Trackmania's* top 20 in B.C., it's helpful to reflect on all the ways it does not serve me.

As for Wreden, he is taking a sabbatical of indefinite length. *Ivy Road* will resume operations without his oversight. In his interview with the *New York Times*, Wreden admits he will likely have little to no involvement in its next production. Instead, he hopes to be a regular sight on the waterfront of Vancouver. ©





a welcome distraction at viff

An interview with Brian Daniel Johnson
words by Matt Schmidt / illustrations by Byeonghun Lee

There's a certain kind of loneliness that feels uniquely Vancouver. Not the poetic kind you write sad notebooks about in high school, and not the epic filmic kind where someone gazes dramatically over the skyline — I mean the slow, ambient, everyday kind.

The loneliness of waiting 15 minutes at Main Street for the Skytrain at 11PM. Of scrolling through group chats where everyone is enthusiastically free... next month. Of knowing you technically have friends, but somehow, you still feel like you're trespassing inside your own life.

It's the kind where everything around you is beautiful — snowcaps, cedars, neon dusk reflecting off rain-slicked pavement — yet that beauty keeps sliding across the surface of things, never landing anywhere that feels like home. The city asks you to be grateful for how gorgeous it is, even when you're lonely in it. But within that loneliness is the possibility of choosing one another.

Brian Daniel Johnson's debut feature film *A Welcome Distraction* lives right in that contradiction. A character study that unfolds across a full year in Vancouver, the film follows Ernest (played with quietly painful looseness by Simon Farrell), a guy drifting in the aftermath of a breakup and a family tragedy. He's not destroying himself, and he's not healing either. He's just... not calling his mom back. He's smoking too much. He's going places and doing things — hikes, parties, new-age gatherings in the woods — and floating above the emotional weight of his life like a balloon someone forgot to tie to anything.

It just feels like life. Or at least, life in Vancouver.

Johnson didn't want the city to be a backdrop. No glass tower establishing shots. No Lionsgate, Science World, and **definitely** no Steam Clock. He wanted the city that those of us who live here recognize: bus loops, backyards, dim apartments, and pink mountain peaks poking over the downtown skyline at sunset.

"We all knew we wanted to make a movie about Vancouver. Something set in Vancouver that wasn't embarrassed about it. Movies set in New York have such a legacy. Everybody knows the New York archetypes, so they don't have to explain what the Empire State Building is. I don't know if that exists in Vancouver, but I felt like the way to do it was by pretending that shorthand already exists — which it does for people who live here. We made it for ourselves, and if other people want to get on the train, great. That's usually how cool things start anyways."

But this isn't a romanticization of the city. Johnson is not naive about what living here actually feels like.

"You have these beautiful landscapes — both urban and natural — and then within it are these clusters of people who are

driving each other crazy. That's what the movie gets at — this confusing duality."

If you've lived here through more than one winter, this next part hits like a documentary:

"Everything has to do with the weather. The joke is 'you have to figure out your social group in the summertime.' Then you lock-in all your friends in September and then you have to ride it out through the winter."

What emerges is not a city of coldness, but a city that requires intentionality. If connection happens here, it's because someone chose it. Being passive about that choice often leads down the road to loneliness.

Ernest waits for life to resolve itself without him. The film, by contrast, exists because no one involved waited. Where Ernest withdraws, the filmmakers lean in; where Ernest isolates, they gather. The movie isn't just about the difficulties of connection, but it's also the result of people choosing one another when drifting apart would have been easier.

The film was developed entirely independently — not as a branding exercise in "DIY filmmaking," but because there was no other real option. Johnson and cinematographer Andriy Lyskov were both working in equipment rental houses, surrounded by gear and crews, watching opportunities pass them by while waiting for arts funding that never arrived. So they stopped waiting, and they funded the film themselves.

They shot across twelve months, whenever they could, whenever people were available. They shot when the weather allowed — and even when it very much did **not**. The day before they were to shoot the ending of the film, a sheet of snow was dumped on them overnight.

"We were totally snowed up a mountain. I thought those days were going to be scrapped, but, by the power of the crew, we still made our days. We were all pinching ourselves. We couldn't believe that we got it. You can't plan that. Talk about making something within your means. You can't afford to sit around paying crew, keeping them on hold until the weather clears. So it was just kind of magical."

Isn't that just the most 'Vancouver filmmaking story' possible?

Filmmaking in Vancouver is often described as prohibitively expensive or depressingly corporate, but Johnson doesn't talk about cost — he talks about people. This was a film that existed because the people making it wanted to be there. Not because an executive told them to be, and not because anyone was being paid enough to pretend.

The emotional center of the film's production wasn't Ernest's solitude — it was the collaborative intimacy needed to translate that solitude into something watchable. The film's story and its making share the same lesson: connection only happens when someone decides to stay.

"Everybody needs a collaborator. You can't be an artist in a box. It's just not a thing.

Every artist has a symbiotic relationship with the audience. And the way you build your audience is by working with the people around you who are doing similar work to you."

His creative & life partnership with producer/AD Dide Su Bilgin is both professional and personal — a shared practice of choosing to grow alongside each other rather than isolating into auteur mythologies. A tit-for-tat approach, for it is mutual aid that makes the film world go round.

"Everybody deserves to tell a story, but with film you need support. So everybody can't go off and become a director. I like doing both. And it's nice that the group of people that I'm with — my partner being one of them — they have an unpretentious opinion about filmmaking."

The film is about loneliness, yes, but it was made out of community. Like many first features, Johnson initially imagined *A Welcome Distraction* as a serious drama — the kind you make to prove you're serious enough to be allowed to make movies. But then Simon Farrell started *being* Ernest instead of *acting* earnest, and the film cracked open. His embodiment of the character drew out the tragic irony buried in the script's subtext — an irony Johnson himself hadn't fully recognized during the writing process. It wasn't until the premiere screening with a packed house at VIFF where Johnson realized just how funny the film had become.

"Early on, he leaves a voicemail to his ex-girlfriend, and that got some good laughs — rightfully so, cause it's a really funny scene. I'm pretty sure I was laughing even when we made it. Simon's performance is so special there. I didn't leave a voicemail exactly like that, but I think we've all been in that scenario one way or another when you're like, 'Hey, saw you at the party.' So I'm glad that that got a laugh. I think a lot of people felt what Ernest was feeling in that moment."

The comedy works because it comes from recognition — not irony. The film never laughs *at* Ernest — it laughs because everyone in the room has been Ernest at least once. It's empathy disguised as humour. Ernest avoids emotional confrontation the way most of us do — quietly. By leaving parties early. By not picking up the phone. By letting discomfort dictate direction.

"As we were writing early drafts, I was like, 'why am I writing all these scenes of this character walking out on people?'... oh, I kind of do that. I would say it's a misguided form of protection that ends up being self-sabotage. I don't want to copy and paste my exact experiences, but it's nice to create these realities where you can go over them again and again. You can retime them and reframe them, and you can kind of perfect them."

Johnson isn't teaching a moral lesson. He's producing a mirror — for himself as much as for anyone watching.

"People nowadays are really insistent on avoiding their problems — that's down to the title of the movie. There are a lot of distractions out there. There's an economy

of ‘ways out’ for people, but they’re hollow, and there’s nothing at the center of it. That’s what I was getting at — something that seems like a good idea for avoiding momentary discomfort. By the end of the movie, we kind of see what happens when that builds up.”

Avoidance is not villainous here. It’s heartbreaking.

The wellness group in the woods isn’t villainous here either — it’s familiar. The Pacific Northwest has always been a place where people come to reinvent themselves, or disappear, or perform enlightenment like an aesthetic.

“The Pacific North-Western culture in North America, it’s kind of far away from even the rest of North America. So maybe there’s this impetus to unlock something that hasn’t been figured out before. They really want to innovate, reject the past, and find something new.”

Johnson credits his fascination with secret societies like The Freemasons and Shriners to his sister, who passed her fascination off to him at an early age.

“I wasn’t interested in doing the robes and the swords and the bloody sacrifice — which is cool, and definitely entertaining — but I was more interested in why those things get started. These secret societies — why do they feel the need to be secret? Is it nefarious, or is it a way to avoid attention so they can operate and get about their work? That’s kind of where it began — a bit more of an honest take rather than a spooky one.”

And when you think about it, it makes sense. These societies are often looked at through a sort of *Eyes Wide Shut*, Bohemian Grove, Illuminati-type lens of theatrics and corruption, but the reality is often much more subdued.

“The funny thing is, the Freemasons were more or less like a camera guild — like IATSE 669. It was basically Stone Masons who wanted to unionize.”

In the film, the wellness group is less sinister than it is soothing — a place to retreat rather than to grow.

“Everybody’s chasing a little bit of peace and a little bit of order. It’s funny. A lot of the teachings of these wellness groups feel a little bit scattershot. You look at something like ancient Buddhist teachings, and it’s very disciplined and holistic. No surprise there. They’ve been around for forever. A lot of these new age things use the language of those teachings, but they’re much more targeted at allowing people to step away from themselves.”

The cult isn’t a threat. It’s a refuge that doesn’t actually heal anything. Which is exactly why Ernest goes. He doesn’t want to heal. He just wants a distraction.

The film’s visual approach reinforces the emotional one. Ernest keeps running from intimacy, but the camera doesn’t let him. Johnson credits cinematographer Andriy Lyskov for much of the film’s visual identity.

Heavy use of long lenses evokes isolation — influenced by the films of Robert Altman, Andrea Arnold, and the Dardenne Brothers.

The sound design often prioritizes Ernest’s audio in conversations, making others literally sound more distant, even when they’re right next to him — reinforcing Ernest’s POV, and translating his emotional detachment in an incredibly creative way.

“You’re observing him, and you get comfortable observing him. Then, when you get into these oppressively tight, handheld conversations, Ernest doesn’t really have any room to hide. So you end up seeing these cracks — not in Simon’s performance, but in Ernest’s performance — performing his role of ‘cool Vancouver guy’. He’s really putting it on, and you can see the edges of it. He runs away from everything, but he can’t run away from the camera.”

Cinema as accountability. By the end of our conversation, Johnson returns to the core message:

“Fair weather friendships are easy to maintain... A real loving friendship is about being there when it’s tough. We witness Ernest not be there, and recognize that he wasn’t there. I hope that’s what people take away.”

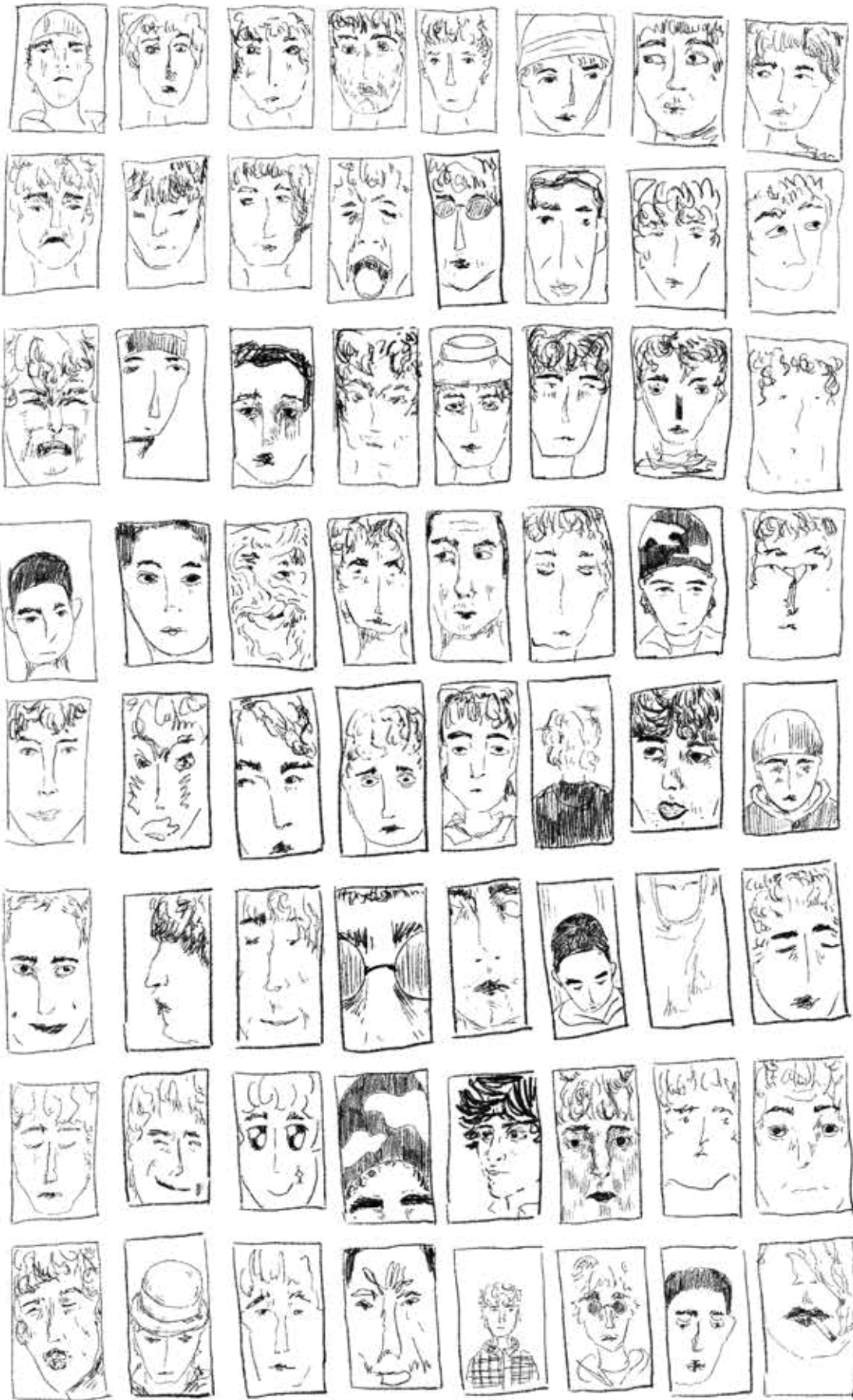
He says this gently, without judgement, like someone who has had to relearn it. We all have. After the whirlwind of releasing his first feature:

“Now I want to go out and work on other people’s projects kind of like a karmic thank you.”

The film suggests that loneliness is not a failing — it’s a default setting here. The

courage is in deciding to override it. *Welcome Distraction* believes that community isn’t something you *fall into*; it’s something you practice.

Now, after making a film about someone learning that the hard way, Brian Daniel Johnson is choosing to do the same. ☺





Hey [REDACTED], I wanted to touch base with you regarding the next Airhead article. The social media campaign flopped. Again. Our social media manager didn't quite understand what you meant by "Jupiter by Kelela plays over a clip of Nina Bo'nina Brown sitting on an ottoman" and I don't think our followers understood it either. The only submissions we've received so far to airhead@citr.ca have been a picture of a tumbleweed and the bot from last time, following-up on off-site accounting. Look, I can try asking around the station to have some of the staff write in again, but honestly... with the way things are looking, why don't you consider writing some of these submissions yourself?

-Tasha

Zero submissions. Zero fucking submissions. All these op-eds. All these substacks. All these writers yet no one wants to fucking write. Is it all the emails? When was the last time any of you wrote a letter? A *real* letter: a *shaky-pen-leaking-sorry-into-I'm* letter; hell, even a *finger-sweat-blending-pencil-marks-all-over-the-page* letter? When was the last time you caught yourselves smothering traces of "with love" with a starker and subdued "sincerely"? You rats wouldn't know writing if it slapped you across the face. Good writing has teeth. Good writing swipes and hisses and stinks. It grows bitter and croaks until it keels over and dies. I can't even call my hurt over this matter anger anymore. I am simply disgusted. All of you disgust me.

And *you*, Tasha, have disgusted me most of all. I'm not just a journalist, I'm an artist. I'm a soothsayer. This is my vocation. You haven't just asked me to "submit some of these submissions myself," you've asked me to flagellate all over a screen when the real thing is sitting right there, begging to touch me. And for what? Some fucking quotas? I don't care what happens to me if I don't meet them. I would sooner fish out a submission from the literal dumpster than be caught publishing a false or misleading statement ever again. To betray the truth, the very thing tethering "you" to "me," would make me no better than fucking ChatGPT.

Airhead

Re: Hello. May you please reply to my previous email?

Hi, I wanted to reach out to see if you'd be open to a quick discussion about our off-site accounting services. If it's easier, I'd be happy to send over more information along with pricing details for your review at your convenience. Please let me know what works best for you! Thanks!

Oh, [REDACTED]... How did it ever come to this? One minute you're hot, the next your face is on a pupplay deepfake. *Never* let anyone film you trying cruelty-free "granola" for a cookie at Shambhala music festival.

Airhead

Dear Airhead,

I'm an actor. I've been in some projects recently but... I don't know. I'm getting worried. I've been having this nightmare where I'm surrounded by curtains. I'm in the wings, I think, and everything is dark and I can hear applause in the distance. I try to sift myself through to the crowd but I keep tripping on sandbags and stage props. I try to catch myself but the curtains won't let me hold them. The roars grow louder but the further I go the curtains never seem to stop. I never find the light.

Natalie Portman

I'm not saying Natalie Portman actually wrote this, but a letter bearing this lady's signature showed up in the mail. I wasn't gonna respond to it — I mean we get mail from aspiring artists all the time — but something about it touched me. The rawness. The fear. I saw myself in her..

Sweetheart, have you ever seen a snake run on velvet? Believe me when I tell you it'll be okay.

Take this as a sign from the divine: you will never amount to anything. Give up while you still can.

Airhead

Hey, it's me, the Newspaper over the windows. I'm weak and I haven't eaten since March, my tape is giving out and I don't think I can hold on much longer. Please take me down.

Newspaper Over-The-Window

Oh Newspaper, she must have left us this note in April, just before she succumbed to the injury that was her existence.

For those too young, too old, or too ugly to have been around; the abomination in question came into this world in the hours preceding a speakeasy the Art Beat (FKA Arts Collective) hosted in March. The squirrels in charge didn't want the rats roaming the AMS nest to snoop into such debaucherous activities as white people listening to jazz. They needed a tarp to cover the windows. No one knows just how many copies of the *Discorder Magazine* were desecrated in the process, but they frankensteined that poor thing together with clear tape and the electricity that only twenty-year-olds are known to possess.

I must admit... she *was* cute, for a moment. But what was supposed to last a day dragged into a month. It was the most hideous time. Everyone developed cabin fever. Venus retrograde had just started too and a suitor of mine would weave in and out of the station. I could never let my guard down. Who exactly was waiting for us on the other side? Sure, they couldn't see in, but we just as tragically couldn't look out.

Airhead

Confession.

Last week my electricity got shut off. I don't have a gas stove. So to cook, to keep warm in the coldest of winters, to heat up my bath water, I light copies of *Discorder* on fire. The fires get pretty big sometimes, but never too big. Some issues burn better than others. Some writers burn better than others. Free paper. Caged thoughts. What are you gonna do about it?

You- you- you- wwwwrutch! HOW DARE YOU! Don't you have a microwave? I practically threw myself at your feet, cried to you about my community service, what would happen to me if I failed, and all you could think to write into *my* column was to tell me you burn pieces of my literal soul for your own amusement? With how much we've skimped on printing costs, you couldn't even start a wildfire with one of these and you *know* that. A living, breathing, sentient being *died* for you to be holding a copy of this godforsaken magazine in your fucking hands. Fuck you. If you wanted to keep your brittle sadistic heart warm you'd be better off turning this shit into a hideous gargantuan tarp and spending the rest of your days in a sarcophagus. I place a curse on you, you twisted wretched fuck. I hope you perish in one of your stupid little fires. SOON.

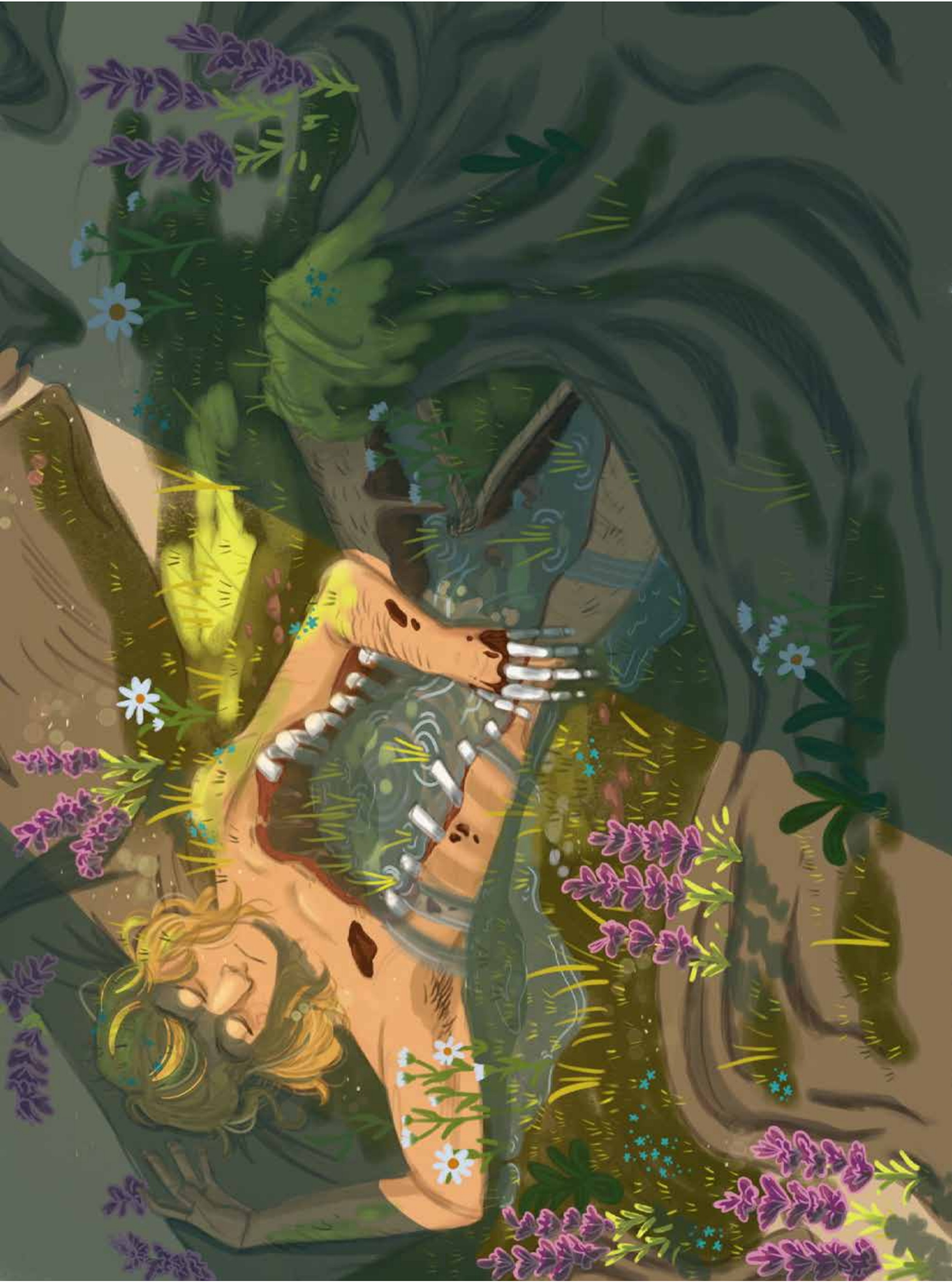
As a matter of fact, do *any* of you read this shit? Clearly none of you are willing or able to write in, but can any of you pathetic shrews sit for longer than twenty fucking seconds and read *anything*? Are these magazines just decorations to all of you? Say you skunks actually *did* read this issue. *Can* any of you tell me what *echolia echolia* is about? What even was the name of the film festival that was screened at the Cinematheque?

I have had ENOUGH! The person with the most insightful, engaged, and thought-provoking opinion on ANY of these articles will have a *guaranteed* feature in the next installment of this godforsaken feedback column. And because I know you petty fucking money grubbers live only for the maggots in the produce aisle, I will personally e-transfer the winner fifty (50) Canadian Dollars!

I hope you all have the most miserable Christmases of your lives.

Airhead





JANUARY - 2026

01	RYOSUKE KIYASU/MODALE/SCHNUDLBUG @TAKE YOUR TIME	
02		MEN I TRUST @VOGUE THEATRE
03	FALSE FLAG/SSIK/MAL CRIADO/FILIGREE SILVER GOD @THE COBAL'T	CITY OF THE SUN/PORTAIR @FOX CABARET
	DISTRO DISCO: DONATION DRIVE (11AM-2PM @MCSPADDEN PARK	15
04		UNREAL CITY FESTIVAL NIGHT 01 @RICKSHAW THEATRE
05		STEVE GUNN/JEFFREY SILVERSTEIN @FOX CABARET
06		16
07		ANA POPOVIC @RICKSHAW
08		SURF HAT/CISTERN @HOLLYWOOD THEATRE
09		BALKAN/TEKARRA/CIRRATA @ASTORIA
10		17
11		SHREK RAVE @THE PEARL
		SUPERSONIC @COMMODORE BALLROOM
		MEN I TRUST @VOGUE THEATRE
		MONSTER RALLY @FOX CABARET
		DISTRO DISCO: GRANDVIEW DISTRO (3PM-6PM) @GRANDVIEW PARK
12		18
13		NORILLAG(FINAL VANCOUVER SHOW)/RHYTHMN OF CRUELTY/COVERT FORCES @RED GATE
14		19
		20
11		21

22

22	JO PASSED/BABE CORNER/BUDDIE @THE PEARL
23	INFIDELS JAZZ PRESENTS: CITY POP CITY @RICKSHAW THEATRE
24	TOM GREEN @VOGUE THEATRE
25	JACOB BANKS @COMMODORE
26	KITTIN/ANNIKA WOLFE/LEMURIAN/TIME WARRIORS @INDUSTRIAL 236
27	KAYO DOT/XASTHUR/THE NAUSEA @WISE HALL
28	
29	THUMPASAUURUS @RICKSHAW THEATRE
30	MASOUD SADEGHLOO @VOGUE THEATRE
31	PEEL OFF @THE PEARL
32	JADE EAGLESON @COMMODORE BALLROOM
33	KIDS ON FIRE/TERMINAL CITY RATS/OL' DORIS/EARMARKED @GREEN AUTO
34	THE OFFSPRING/BAD RELIGION @ROGERS ARENA
35	SYLO/MONET NGO @FOX CABARET
36	NAMELESS KING/THE UNENDING/OMNIESIA/ ABANDONED YESTERDAY @BULLY'S
37	DISTRO DISCO: OPPENHEIMER DISTRO (11AM-2PM) @OPPENHEIMER PARK
38	
39	TALIB KWELI @RICKSHAW THEATRE
40	
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31	A MOURNING STAR/GUILT/DUNGEON SERPENT/ SWORD OF DAMOCLES/MAKE IT RIGHT @GREEN AUTO
32	SAY SHE SHE/KATZU OSO @HOLLYWOOD THEATRE
33	TWO LANES @COMMODORE BALLROOM
34	INFIDELS JAZZ PRESENTS: PARMELA ATTARIWALA @ZAMEEN ART HOUSE
35	PLAGUEDOCTOR/DEATHBOUND/DENDROS/ GREGORIOUS @ASTORIA
36	
37	FKA. FEST @WISE
38	
39	ACCUSED A.D./FULLY CRAZED/NOBODY @LANALOUS
40	DEATH SENTENCE/STOLEN GOODS/SUPER DISTORTER/IN THE FLESH @CHILL HOUSE
41	
42	VENNA @FORTUNE SOUND
43	
44	SHAME @THE PEARL
45	
46	SUDAN ARCHIVES @THE PEARL
47	
48	GLACIAL MUTILATION 2026 @VARIOUS
49	
50	SUN RA ARKESTRA @THE PEARL
51	
52	A WILHELM SCREAM/DEATH BY STEREO/DOOMSDAY @WISE HALL
53	
54	FUCK FEBRUARY FEST II FT. BISON/ HEAVY TRIP/ALIEN BOYS/SPACE QUEEN/BURNT LUNG @RICKSHAW THEATRE

FEBRUARY - 2026

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Discorder

in the wild

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COFFEE / ARBUTUS COFFEE / THE PAINTED SHIP / LA LA ISLAND /
BANYEN BOOKS / UNIT/PITT / NAAM / ZULU RECORDS / PAPER
CRANE COFFEE / RED CAT RECORDS / LUCKY'S COMICS / NEPTOON
RECORDS / BEBOP INK / JJ BEAN (MAIN) / FORECAST COFFEE /
KRANKY CAFE / RED GATE ARTS SOCIETY / FEDERAL STORE /
APERTURE COFFEE BAR / LIBERTY COFFEE / LUCY'S DINER /
MATCHSTICK COFFEE / SLICE OF LIFE GALLERY / PRADO
(COMMERCIAL) / AUDIOPILE / SPARTACUS BOOKS / PEOPLE'S
CO-OP / MUM'S THE WORD / JJ BEAN (COMMERCIAL) /
BUMP'N'GRIND COFFEE / COMMERCIAL STREET CAFE / BIG JOY
BARBER & SALON / FAR OUT COFFEE / JJ BEAN (VICTORIA) / EAST
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2022

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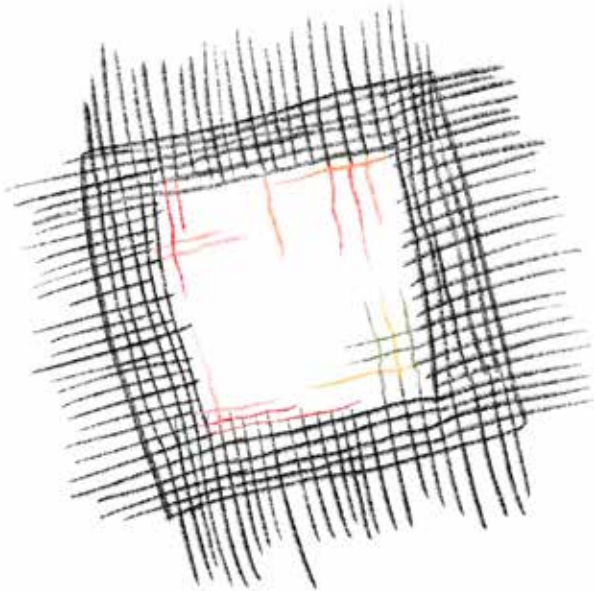
Symbiosister.com

As I turned left into the exhibition space, the white walls of the gallery seemed to fade away, replaced by a pulsing atmosphere of colour and texture. My eyes met the first piece, *Queer Planet* (2016). From a distance, it glowed red against the muted room, a magnetic first encounter. The title hovered confidently at the top, stitched into a square form mimicking order, the way a book cover organizes chaos into meaning. But as I stepped closer, that sense of structure began to fracture.

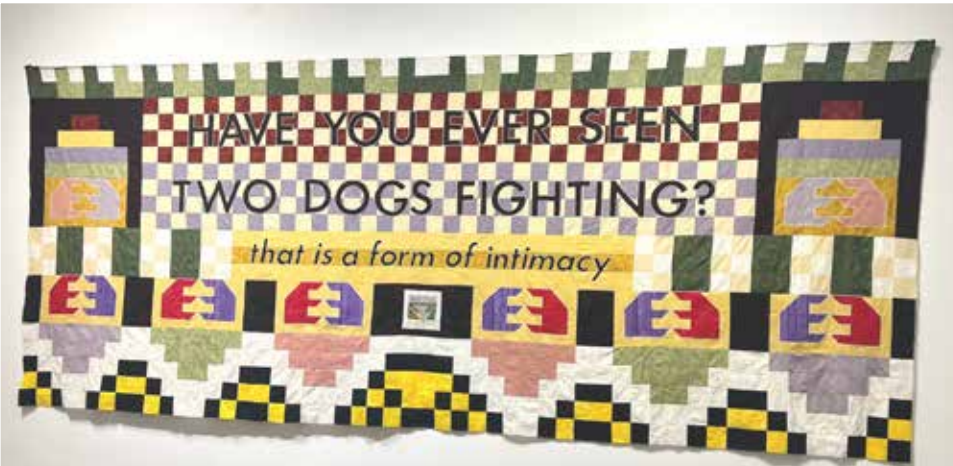
The foundation on which the title rested was a thin, red cloth-like texture that seemed delicate, almost sensitive to touch. Vanilla-toned stars were embedded on the surface of the cloth, unevenly shaped and scattered in what at first appeared to be disorder but slowly revealed itself as an intentional rhythm: a constellation of individuality. At the edges of the piece, thin coral strands escaped from the red field. They curled outward, loose and restless, as though the fabric could not be contained by its frame. The threads caught the light and twisted, each one slightly different from the next. It reminded me of the way sunlight slips through a closed curtain, not evenly, but in thin, searching lines.

At first, my mind tried to restore order — to find logic, pattern, or design. But the more I looked, the more I felt that the piece was teaching me something about the beauty of unpredictability. It wasn't a quiet or restrained kind of perfection; it was radiant, spinning beyond the rules I knew. I found myself breathing in rhythm with the work, realizing that uniqueness, irregularity, and even disruption could feel harmonious when given the space to exist.

As my eyes moved downward, the large, stitched words *REJOICE* appeared, each one rendered in a different colour. The first *REJOICE* were coloured distinctly: some letters with dark yellow, some white, and some burgundy. The second *REJOICE* was green, lighter, with a subtle shine to it. These shifting colours made me realize that even the same word can hold multiple meanings — that its emotional tone changes with context, texture, and shade. This



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CHANGING CHANGE



flexibility of meaning, I thought, might be what makes language, and art, beautiful. What I had assumed to be a fixed pattern revealed itself as something larger, more intricate. The piece made me think that uniqueness is often hidden within the everyday, waiting to be noticed.

When I turned right, I found *Regret and Redress: CRY* (2006). At the top of the piece, the word “CRY” was stitched backward — a small detail that immediately unsettled me. My mind wanted to flip it, to correct it, to restore what felt like the “right” direction. But maybe that was exactly the point. The inversion and uneven texture challenged my sense of what is “normal,” “right,” or “acceptable.”

The longer I looked, the more the reversed word began to make sense in its own way. The letters, though backward, formed a kind of balance. It made me realize that what first appears wrong can become coherent if given time and attention. The piece gave me a quiet sense of calm, as if it were teaching me that peace can come from accepting things as they are, that form, even unconventional form, carries its own logic if you allow yourself to see it.



Then came the piece that surprised me most: *Epiphany (Have You Ever Seen Two Dogs Fighting?)*, (2006). Its materials felt heavier, its colours toned down — darker, more deliberate. There was more symmetry here: black and yellow, garnet red, lavender, and white, designed as checkered stripes arranged evenly across the surface. The consistency and flow of the colours gave a sense of structure and security.

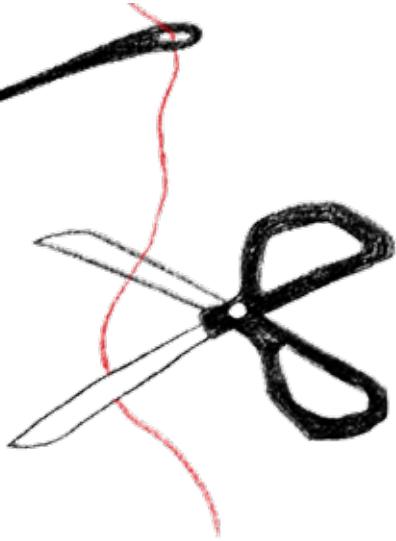
Across the top center, the question was printed in large letters: *HAVE YOU EVER SEEN TWO DOGS FIGHTING?* The words struck me like a sudden memory. I had. I remembered the chaos, the sound, the panic. The bite I once received as a child, the

fear of blood, the fear of disease. Beneath that question, faintly printed in black, were the words: *that is a form of intimacy*.

That juxtaposition startled me. Intimacy — in fighting? The materials reflected this contradiction: the balanced, almost serene structure contrasted with the violence implied by the text. The darker colours and measured symmetry grounded the piece, yet it seemed to wrestle internally with tenderness and aggression. It revealed that connection isn't always gentle; sometimes intimacy is raw, charged, and full of friction — the point where emotion meets contact. The longer I looked, the more I felt my understanding of closeness begin to shift.

Finally, I arrived at *No Longer Homeless* (2003). The atmosphere changed once again, lighter now, almost hopeful. The words *NO LONGER HOMELESS* were stitched in soft pink satin, the letters gently raised from a white background like quiet signs of resilience. The texture seemed smoother than in the other pieces, but on the right side, a strip of sun-bleached gold fabric clung to the edge. Within it, a small square patch of muted yellow rested — its surface marked by dark green lines tinged with black, some straight, others squiggly, broken, or faintly connected. As I traced those lines with my eyes, I thought about the idea of home — how I often imagine it as something stable, complete, permanent. But here, home appeared as something assembled, improvised, rebuilt from fragments. Perhaps to be “no longer homeless” doesn't mean finding a house, but rather finding peace within one's own patchwork self. The more I looked, the more I felt that the piece was offering that same message, that belonging can exist even in brokenness.

Walking through the exhibition, I felt that the work opened a space for reflection I hadn't anticipated. The colours, textures, and forms didn't just exist to be seen; they created a rhythm that invited me to slow down, to follow the movement of each thread, stripe, and word. I realized that difference, in scale, colour, texture, or orientation, was not a disruption but an entry point for thought. It allowed me to question how meaning is made, how connection is felt, and how perception shifts depending on where I place my attention. I left with a sense of expansiveness, carrying the awareness that observation itself can reveal layers of understanding, both in art and within myself. ©



echolalia echolalia

by Jane Shi

words by Oceania Chee
illustrations by Zoë Geller-Alford

Released through Ontario indie press *Brick Books* in late 2024, *echolalia echolalia*, by Vancouver poet Jane Shi is a document of disorientation — holding a prism to, and thus fragmenting The Canon. This is Shi's first traditionally published offering, but to call this collection a debut would obfuscate the assuredness with which it grapples with the normative demands of poetry, and by extension, how the world should look. The poems' speaker is, in the words of fellow Vancouver diaspora poet Jim Wong-Chu, "smeared in another language," and this condition is what informs the tussling with English that ensues from there. For migrants/the Chinese diaspora, language (and English in particular) is not so much gained as foisted upon you for your own survival. This uncomfortable knot of language, identity, selfhood, and translation is there in Azure Road's English-Mandarin mixing—"duoduoba animorphs / into promising / you won't speak / to them again" — a pidgin-something just shy of nonsense, but then so much of the in-between looks like nonsense to those outside of it.

Within that too there is the potent desire to move past the particularities of distinction and definition through which pain is inflicted, a "reorganiz[ation] of our neural networks," as reviewer Rita Wong puts it. Shi's writing thrives where it inhabits surrealities; poems' speaker(s) flirt with the moon on Lex, pirate their lovers onto DVDs, roam near-dead strip malls, mix Mandarin and Chinese dialects and things approximating English recklessly. At its best, the breadth of these connections are an act of world-rebuilding — much needed after tearing down the rules and traditions of the Canon. *echolalia echolalia's* vision of the world reconstitutes it into new nooks and crannies, and just like the

rest of life, some of them within reach to the reader, many others left opaque.

But opacity is always a big swing — asking your reader to accept a degree of illegibility requires the promise that you will not short-change them by masking incomprehensibility as artistic license. Like having a toxic manager at work, conceding to *echolalia echolalia's* choices demands a strange mix of both intimacy and deference. An awkward bit of phrasing might be the result of sloppy editing, or it might simply not be for you to understand. The only thing that justifies this ambiguity is the kind of implicit trust you would grant a new friend in real life, not an author presenting a finished work. I typically love a difficult read, but instead of being rewarded for my concentration, I felt that I was asked to overlook dubious choices in deference to the authority of subjectivity, instead of interrogating a malfunction in the machinery of craft.

An example: in many of the offerings, there is a loftiness made faintly embarrassing by how often these observations fail at profundity, a failure made all the more palpable by that desire for emotional intimacy. The speaker of these poems has rare moments of clarity and insight, then veers sharply into stale cliché. The highs and the lows are made all the more jarring when they are right next to each other: for every "regret is obsolescence with a purpose" ("Pirated DVDs are my Cousins"), there is the tired comparison of heavy metal music to EMDR therapy ("Deep Inside You're Just a Tool Fan"). Quiet, coherent, observances of routine injustice ("yesterday, there was a / fire truck that took too / long to get to the other / side of the bridge") share space with syntactical disasters — "the miracle of our / automatic nervous systems belongs / to whoever beyond us we believe / in more than our grandmothers." In a strange way, maybe in the right light, these stumbles could have been meaningful, making the limitations of language palpable. But where I might have given grace to an artist working against the boundaries of their medium, I really only wanted to look away.

There's also the unfortunate question of the humor, which is not to my taste. The jokes in this book are perhaps its most transportative feat — when I read them, I am sent back to being 19 and hungover at my minimum wage retail job, humoring the canned small talk of a customer outstaying their welcome. A heady blend of self-referentiality ("Can't exploit me if I'm a fuck-up"), already outdated internet slang ("#AskYrAncestorsAnything", "wanting to unalive myself"), limpid attempts at political satire (censoring "Tr*deau", "H*rper"), basic word-association puns ("griefcase", "English Shiterature"), all delivered with an uncomfortable and unearned affect of friendliness, so that what initially comes off as a distracting authorial quirk reveals itself to be a genuine impediment to reader engagement (or, at least, to this reader's engagement). I'm

back behind the cash register forcing laugh after laugh while my brain slowly leaks out of my ears. The extent to which humor is subjective is a defense that I reject here as yet another way that unjustified artistic choices are excused, because the emotional closeness it's being used to engender actively prevents an understanding of the text on the reader's own terms. When *echolalia echolalia* wants so badly to uncover the rhizomatic ties that bind, discovering that one of those ties appears to be the *I Can Haz Cheezburger?* cat is a great blow to its credibility.

I am not unsympathetic to Shi's artistic and political goals. Marginalization is to live in spite of it all, and I too have looked at the world and surmised that the only way to find a space for myself and my people is to make it anew. However, as experimental and obtuse as it may present itself, *echolalia echolalia's* desire to deconstruct and reconnect all of life to itself is actually extremely habitual to The Canon. Unfortunately, sometimes even old dead white people knew how to do it. In fact this tendency is maybe best and most famously expressed by that giant of "Norton's Anthology of English Shiterature" (expressed in the very first poem of the collection), George Eliot: "If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heartbeat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence." To her credit, Shi seems to want to face that roar *head on*, and even to hear the grass and the squirrels and all that: "tell me the difference between my bones and the bones of whale shark." What Eliot and her peers knew, and which Shi could use a gentle reminder of, is that when this is done well, the reader will *want* to feel it too; not only with the author but with everyone and everything else.

But that is my point — that the shining moments in this collection come from when Shi forgets to refer to the body as merely a "flesh suit," and remembers that each existence is specific and embodied, and yes, authentic. By far the funniest part of the book, and the part that I felt most intimately connected to, is when the speaker calls a white ex "my sweet bare minimum." These are *echolalia echolalia's* successes: just-ripe, clinging on the vine like rare October blackberries. The comforting back-and-forth of the pirate ship ride at PNE with an old friend. Losing/casting off the language you share with your parents as you drift apart. Elegies to strangers gone before their time, others from the margins sapped away too soon — so heartbreaking that I too began to grieve them. Speaking as another body straddling what Shi calls the 'industries of care and language,' I can tell you that there are harder lessons to learn than the world's essential connectedness. In the things we do to survive, the things we abandon to live, there is sadness; but within that sadness is happiness too, and the potential for beauty — "silver quills mined from porcupine graves." ©

Under Review

RECORDED MUSIC



Often Wrong

The Figs are Starting to Rot

SELF-RELEASED | DECEMBER 01, 2025

More than all the other so-called “genres” of the Earth, emo excels at juxtaposition and contradiction, giving words to wordless things. The loudest pause. A wicker basket so full of laundry, the addition of a single sock can cause a violent collapse into singularity. The feeling before sunrise, 4:38AM, when your throat is dry and your legs are caught in the mound of sheets at the foot of the bed and something is wrong, which you want so badly to fix but you aren’t truly waking. You’re caught in the hypnagogic silence of sleep and all you can do is toss and turn as your mind fills with the fierce anger of a child until you shoot up and cry out. When your words fail, you will find yourself reaching for the gee-tar and trying to dance it out.

With their debut EP, *Often Wrong* is chasing moments of emotional clutter – inside us, things happen on top of each other. Leave it to an emo band to remind you that a song isn’t a sentence to be read out of a novel:

“I feel happy... now, I feel sad.”

Okay. No, you don’t. Music might be expressed through time, but it is spatial, simultaneous. *Often Wrong* deals in micro-seconds and provides a soundtrack for the instant in which a rascal kid burning printer paper ignites the bedroom drapes and realizes that it’s more over than ever before. Discomfort in the face of all-encompassing change tends to isolate the self, just enough to freeze your feet while you watch everything burn down around you.

As it is with the all-timers, the style is substance. *Often Wrong*’s phrasing will stretch you and snap you like a rubber band, hanging you up on a shrieking double stop before dropping you down into catharsis as you hear that ride cymbal start to shake and your body won’t wait. I wanted to sob and run through the wall at the same time. Maybe that’s just me. Vocals are compressed with a heavenly gate, airy and proximal as if you are inside the speaker’s head. On “Embrace”, the bass part is at once the track’s solid foundation and a responsive melodic voice which carries the claustrophobic lyrics past the frontal lobe and straight down into your guts. Make it all melt with a little orange box.

Leave it to an emo band to make you eat your words, because oh boy does dark music inspire camaraderie and joy. During their performance in Shindig Night I, the three-piece captured the room, their ruinous lyrics and abrasive timbre raising blissful grins. It’s generally a terrible idea to discuss your emotions with strangers at DIY shows, but it’s a great idea for everyone to feel them together. You only need to look around to know *Often Wrong* are undeniable. Genuine fig jam. –JULIE SHOEMAKER



Dixie's Death Pool

Soon

SELF-RELEASED | JULY 11 2025

FFO: field recordings, waterfalls, aerosolization, the public square, hidden passages, pressing your ear against the wall

Something is reverberating in the other room. It’s the hum of a wobbling space heater. Wait, that can’t be right. Space heaters aren’t supposed to wobble. But there is definitely a sense of uncertainty in the air, and you’re getting a little hot. Will you chase the fleeting traces of a sunny feeling? Maybe sonic will suffice. Here are sounds from 1999, remastered in 2024 and released this July.

If you would, look at a Lee Hutzulak painting. Come on, go look. Here: <https://leehutzulak.ca>. The guy’s a pretty notable local artist, and hearing his music while being already familiar with his art... it just makes sense. It seems that each figure he depicts is inside of a cave, even when they are not. Perhaps deep inside a cavern, but maybe just crouched by the entrance, half-hidden by a rushing cascade of water. “Commercial Mercury” sure sounds that way. I can hear them, dancing around the fire, telling drunken stories under their own flickering shadows.

Everybody has a cavern. What do you hide, or are you being hidden? We’re still in an ice age, you know? If you lie down and press your ear to it, you might even hear “The Glacier” move. You’ll hear it creak and hear it crack, but there is nothing to be seen. So much of everything lies under the surface.

But while we’re up here, there are ,too, wonders every-which-where. Hutzulak’s work sounds like unabashed colour washes. It looks like guitar strums and xylophone layered over the groaning of an organ. Upon first glance, his drawings are hard to decipher – maybe a “Double Mystery” to us, but with a compelling internal consistency.

It’s “Noon Yellow”, and you’re whispering heat. Let’s take our cities underground – we could start a whole new thing down there. The titular “Soon” sounds like malfunctioning DTMF (the telecommunication one). If all your friends descended into the cave, and couldn’t answer your calls, would you go too? It doesn’t have to mean death – that’s not all that darkness makes. Put on your “Crown of Flies” and let the Soft Animal of Your Body do what it does.

Dead ends often have the most beautiful views. If we’re lucky (and we are), our final breath will evaporate under the shining sun. When you are finally laid down to rest, won’t you be grateful for these stories you’ve lived? Stories by the fire, from in caves with your friends (of which you’ve accumulated many), and of passages hidden behind waterfalls... There you go, “Under the sun baked trees... In the cool of the lilac, and the elm’s arms.”–KAIRN ZHOU



Ada Rook

Unkillable Angel

SELF-RELEASED | DECEMBER 7, 2025

Without getting into the details, the collapse of Ada Rook’s previous band has been turbulent. More than just a collaboration between artists, *Black Dresses* was fueled by the duo’s fervent intimacy. *Unkillable*

Angel is Rook’s first release following the aftermath of the group’s implosion, an exploration of the trauma she faced and the resilient attitude that’s carrying her forward.

Rook’s Bandcamp reads, “The name of this album refers to the me who is a scared little kid. They’re unkillable because, after the hell of this year, I realized I had no choice but to always protect them” and it’s this version of Ada Rook that leads the record. The scars are present on the opener, but her newfound confidence numbs the pain: “Rat kid swag 2025 / Let’s fucking go, bitch.” The track is a shot of adrenaline, hammering the listener with blaring synths, unrelenting bass and Rook’s animalistic vocals; she asserts, “Think I’m feeling love for the problem kid I never was” in the following “PARTY TIME SEXY DISORDER.” The main synthline is an earworm, and beneath the unrelenting digital cacophony lies a solid pop groundwork. “ALL Tails Deaths Animations” is a hip-hop influenced diss track about her former bandmate. It’s skeletal compared to the first few songs, and trades density for visceral moments that really pop when they’re isolated in the mix.

Halfway through the album her confidence slips. “BURY YOURSELF” is especially sobering: “I know you wanna be the victim again / Even as you break my mind down.” The house influence makes this one of the more accessible cuts, until crackling distortion in the song’s back half threatens to rip it apart. Rook resents her naivete on “LOSE YOURSELF”: “When I was stupid and young / I only wanted to be cared for.” Her vocals sound raspy and desperate, and the guitar stutters as it claws its way through a scrap heap of industrial effects and bassy distortion. The following “PEE YUORSELF” is a production highlight. A killer fusion of EDM and hip-hop that benefits greatly from Rook’s fast delivery and riotous attitude. The bass drop after she screams “disappear please!” is one of the album’s best moments.

Rook begins to compose herself around “weed store kratom.” Despite the turmoil, she ends the song on a positive note: “Now I have become someone stronger / Who used to be just a fictional me.” The last two tracks are decent but aren’t high points. “holding your sleeping body…” lacks a tight structure, opting instead to give space for Rook’s storytelling. The manic synths add an urgency to Rook’s vocals, and the heavier bass and distortion in the back half prevent the song from meandering. “sun’s violent arc” works as a light at the end of the storm, with Rook finding love when everything around her is so turbulent. Unfortunately, aside from some nice strings, it lacks a strong melody or much in the way of memorable production choices.

Ada Rook pulls herself out of the wreckage of Black Dresses and asserts her strength as an artist in her own right. Outside of a few cuts that pale in comparison to others, *Ungillable Angel* is an uncompromising and pissed off demonstration of Rook’s incredible songwriting and production sensibilities. May the rat kid inside her live forever.—LEXI FONTAINE



Potatohead People & Slippery Elm

Emerald Tablet
MYSTERY BOX | JULY 11, 2025

Look at the cover of Potatohead People and Slippery Elm’s *Emerald Tablet* – a hazy, luminous warehouse of gold-plated miscellaneous bangles, and beads, whose left-most edge evokes both an old-time jazz record with garnishes of something more esoteric. It’s elaborate yet straightforward, decadent yet simple – interesting in concept, yet always seems lower on real, evocative imagery the longer one looks at it. I doubt a more apt representation of *Emerald Tablet*, its highs and lows, its fundamental aesthetic project, exists, and this is far from the only praise I plan to lay at its feet.

At its best, *Emerald Tablet* whisks you into a world that smells of red velvet and Château d’Yquem with effortless ease. Its two opening tracks, “Chandeliers” with its brass twangs and eclectic synths, and “Nightbird” whose strings and saxophone evoke a luxury Parisian suite on a warm summer’s night, are so effortlessly buttery you can’t help but float through them. Production this elaborate often runs the risk of overdoing it, but every sound is woven in here with the steady hand of an emerald cutter. The products of that passion – rich experiences like the bassy-smooth “Up Close” and the effortlessly decadent “Jazz in the Rain” – are nothing shy of a forty-eight-carat experience.

Far from sounding overproduced, this album’s Achilles’ heel seems to be its overcommitment to consistency. The first several

songs are so ear-catching and soul-stirring one doesn’t mind the broad similarity of sound, style, and subject matter, but as the honeymoon phase wears away and one reaches the back half of the album, the similarity becomes unavoidable. Songs like “Miracles” and “Otha Side” are especially taxing in this regard – bringing only subtly-different flows and hooks to the table, they borrow so much from their album-mates’ wardrobe and still manage to sound conceptually naked. Mind you, not all back-half songs are uninspired – “Sub Rosa,” presenting like a diamond-studded soirée between the production styles of Anderson .Paak and KAYTRANADA, is brilliant – but all of *Emerald Tablet*’s most uninspired cuts are on its back half.

Regardless, a one-trick pony is only guilty insofar as its trick of choice is boring, and *Emerald Tablet*’s trick – to sweep its listener into a world of solar flares and satin bedsheets with all the ease of an evening cruise down a lantern-lit river – is anything but. Potatohead People and Slippery Elm have accomplished more here in terms of soundscape-creation and aesthetic curation than some very well-established (and less-discerning) artists ever will, and for that nobody ought to deny them their flowers. For all intents and purposes, *Emerald Tablet* is not just a success, but a triumph – a blindingly-shiny testament to the suave and sophistry of both Potatohead People as lyricists, but Slippery Elm as a producer. Both are undeniably proficient in the art of putting on the musical ritz, and I expect either party’s next project to be accompanied by a listening party so black-tie and high-brow that I’m priced out of attendance. Excellent work all around!—GABRIEL BELL



Ears

Car Breaks/Can’t I See EP

SELF-RELEASED | JUNE 26, 2025

Ears was recommended to me by the fellows of Computer when I interviewed them a few issues ago – so naturally, I was all over the *Car Breaks/Can’t I See EP* when it hit the Discorder desk.

Its Bandcamp tags read like an unhinged season of musical *Big Brother*: punk, techno, noise pop, and drum & bass living alongside each other through 8 tracks that shouldn’t coexist, yet somehow share space beautifully. The EP is a perpetual stew of clashing textures and moods that thrive precisely because they contradict each other.

It opens with 37 seconds of eerie ambience before smashing into “Car Breaks,” half of the release’s namesake. I wouldn’t say it sets the tone – there is no single tone to cling to here – but it sets the stakes. The song immediately transported me back to seventeen: windows down, winding rural road, and the promise of night driving you past exhaustion – returning only to sleep away the day. The slacker-rock verses lament diurnal life – the gridlocked commutes and fluorescent hours – but when the chorus hits, it explodes into freedom. Pounding bass, crashing cymbals, and the repeated refrain of “*I don’t mind*” feel equally suited to white-knuckling a steering wheel as it does to shouting along in the mosh pit.

Ears doesn’t wait to escalate. “Can’t I See” follows with a harsher, more electronic bite. A bed of distorted noise blankets its first minute before dissolving into some wobbly dnb/breakbeat that almost tricks you into thinking you’ve skipped to another track. The bridge pulls everything back to let you breathe – only to erupt into a thumping climax where the waveform may as well be a solid brick.

From there, the EP shifts (mostly) into instrumentals. “Aether ludes,” the longest track at 6:15, and “St Kank,” both settle into dreamy techno phases that feel ripped straight out of a vintage videogame soundtrack.

“goblin racket” swings hard in the opposite direction. A grimey, squelchy dnb beat beneath two gravel-voiced goblins trading the phrase “I got a racket” back and forth. It’s fun and silly, and will be a mainstay on my Halloween playlist for years to come. Whether or not it clears the house or ignites the dancefloor will remain a delightful unknown.

“a sploooky club” is a similarly Halloweenish techno jam, outfitted with a GoldenEye 64 reverbed pipe-hit sample. Then the closer, “Fuzz bass chill tape jam,” sounds like it could easily be an Imaginal Disk interlude. It feels like being tucked in by

a tiny woodland fairy who thanks you for listening.

Loop back to the intro though, and the dream turns back toward darkness – which is fitting. Ears refuses to be one thing.

the Car Breaks/Can't I See EP is evidence of a band that defies classification and refuses generalization. It's the perfect gateway into their world, especially when listened alongside their full-length debut LP, which released earlier this October, only a few short months after this EP. You'll absolutely find me in the Ears pit next time they play. After one listen, I doubt you'll want to miss it either. –MATT SCHMIDT



Computer

Station On The Hill

DINE ALONE | OCTOBER 10, 2025

Vancouver's Computer occupies a rare space. It might be easy to compare them to the "Windmill scene," a collective of experimental rock bands born out of South London's Windmill Pub, but it is hard to hold it against them.

The similarities to Black Country, New Road, Black Midi, The Last Dinner Party, and Squid are identifiable, but they stand in good company with these influences rather than blending in. And would you believe it – after a banner year, Computer's hard work paid off with a full-circle opportunity to play the Windmill's stage in October.

Don't call it wish fulfillment, though, because just like the bands before them, this feels like a jumping-off point. Their debut *Station On The Hill* puts two years' worth of studio-improvised/road-tested bangers together on a 34-minute LP that serves as both a victory lap and a signal for what's to come.

Opener "Now In A Vacuum" exemplifies the band's strong suit for unpredictability with a grooving rhythm that offers the song's lone point of consistency. Just as you start to bob your head along with the beat and singer Ben Lock's punchy spoken-word delivery, a big wall of chaotic instrumentation (another signature) engulfs the track. The progression sucks you in, almost as if – fittingly – a vacuum is being pushed through the recording booth.

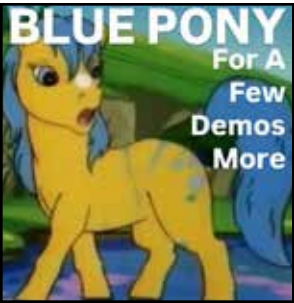
The following track, "Concrete Vehicles," along with lead single "Dissolution Use," delivers the album's most straightforward rock offerings. Each brings the goods with earworm riffs, noisily complemented by the rest of the six (sometimes seven) piece arrangement. Saxophone, keys, and a killer percussion section all get their chance to shine, excellently mixed by founding member and producer Hudson Schelesny.

The chemistry between the members is evident, especially in the quiet moments throughout these songs. As mentioned in Discorder's profile on the band, many of their tunes are written by riffing in the studio. With that in mind, parts where we get Ben's lone guitar plucking away provide a sense that he's giving a trusting look back to the rest of the ensemble like, "Okay, what do we do next?"

Computer is at their best when they slow things down. "I'll Follow," carried by a melodic riff paralleling the lyrical refrain, builds with intention, moving from a thoughtful utterance of the title to all-out wailing. Every instrument is in full form by the end, but the restrained pacing anchors it as the most memorable track on the record.

The closer, lasting nearly a third of the project's run time (if you count the interlude "The Bells"), brings things home with a satisfying conclusion. We are led through three build-ups, gentle riffs crawling to booming peaks, that start to sonically form the titular hills the station may be on.

Computer seemingly uses every tool at their disposal without ever looking at a blueprint. It is not perfect music because they are not trying to make perfect music. This shoot-from-the-hip approach has led them to the very place they are most compared, and the most exciting thing about that is where they go next. –ERICH DACHWITZ



Blue Pony

For A Few Demos More

SELF-RELEASED | AUGUST 2025

They say 2025 is the year of the recession indicator, and with all the good punk rock returning, Blue Pony is no exception. Released in August with four tracks, *For A Few Demos More* is the band's follow-up collection to 2024's *A Fistful Of Demos* and further allows the listener to feel like they're the protagonists of an early-2000s film. The nostalgia is not only felt within the beats and melodies of each song, but is fantastically solidified with the album artwork, which features a pony in a classic old-school style.

The album features four original songs written by the band themselves: "(A) Land Mass Of Referees," "Shine," "Hedgehog Dilemma," and "Faye Webster" (woah, a free shoutout!). The first track, "(A) Land Mass Of Referees," starts strong as a good introduction to the general aesthetic this album brings to the scene. It's loud – in a very confident, assertive, angsty way, heard in both the singing and the instrumentals. The second song, "Shine," flows smoothly afterwards, especially with the upbeat instrumentals at the beginning. Throughout "Shine," I would say they took a very creative route with the instrumentation, as there are bits and pieces of different sounds that really scratch at the listener's brain. Near the end of the song, we also hear a vocal isolation, which really adds to the rock aesthetic that this band was going for.

The song following afterwards, "Hedgehog Dilemma," was probably my favourite one to listen to! There's just a strong burst of energy packed into the 3 minutes and 36 seconds this song has to offer – and it's consistent! The drumming is specifically highlighted in this song, helping with the fast-paced nature and intricately addictive beats. There's so much adrenaline, in fact, I'd say it encapsulates that of a hundred cherry-flavoured energy drinks with how much tension builds as the song goes on. And finally, the last song in the collection, "Faye Webster," is unique in that it starts a bit softer before quickly pulling us back into that rock sound after a brief, yet dramatic, pause. The song establishes itself as tough – and does so with the raw emotion expressed through the lead and backing vocals, including some high-pitched notes paired with aggressive guitar. But that's not the only thing that makes this song stand out; they really make this last song count as they surprise the listener with a melody switch halfway through! The sound becomes a lot more aggressive, but through the melody change, it feels as if it is done with intent – and is quite pleasant to hear. And just when you thought that was the melody this song was going to end with, they switch things up once more! As they capture the listener's attention by picking up the tempo, it's ultimately a very fun way to close off this song and the album itself.

Overall, Blue Pony's *For A Few Demos More* proves itself to be an album worth listening to; it has all the elements of fast-paced rock while also showing a distinct personality from the band members themselves. The album has bold experimental decisions that work for each song and showcase real talent. You'll feel anything but blue after listening to this band. –SHEENAM ☆ PARBHAKAR



Ally Dean

Shallow Water

SELF-RELEASED | SEPT. 27, 2025

Shallow Water is intended for all the existential thinkers of the world, allowing the listener to be consumed by worries of time passing. Ally Dean, who is from Surrey, guides you through her struggles of loss that eventually lead to finding herself. Listening to Dean's voice feels like being wrapped in a warm blanket on a rainy day, while simultaneously bordering on as haunting as an empty home of your deepest concerns. This indie artist understands what it means to build a track by choosing intently her peaks and valleys, and never allows her sound to become too complacent, while still creating a cohesive body of work to call her debut album. With alternative tracks such as "Up2Me" introducing electric elements and "Mother Whale" focusing on her vocal range, alongside other tracks that still offer her signature acoustics and soothing vocals. She explores how time, change and self-restraint can

mirror various stages of water.

There is an air of familiarity surrounding Dean, with the opening track “Morning Song” being reminiscent of Lizzy McAlpine’s “ceilings”, but also breathing in nature aspects that feel like home to anyone from British Columbia. With gut-punching lyrics that are essential to every track, Dean is able to craft her lyrics in a way that feels so intimate, with her heart visible on her sleeve while simultaneously covering it up with lyrics that require multiple listens that build new meanings. Dean holds your hand and explores the mood swings that coincide with grief. Her tracks blend into each other, with foreshadowing of the track “New York,” found in “No Fair, Betty”; “drive me East / I promise to be happy.” It is effortless to get lost in Dean’s vocals and feel the instrumentals that build up each track, but only when listening intently to Dean’s lyrics do you allow her to reach her full potential as an artist.

Even Dean’s simpler lyrics hold various waves of emotion, such as in the title track “Shallow Water,” which still fulfills Dean’s formula of meticulously crafted tracks. Her vocal delivery through repetition and layering alter the meaning even of the same words. Through tempos, Dean gains control over the audience and the story with vocals that guide you through the emotions of the track. The loss explored throughout the album goes beyond the loss of someone else, but loss within yourself. With the album coming to a close with self-realization, in particular with lyrics from “Waves;” “I wasted all the time I had to grow / I’m losing all these parts I used to know.” Dean beautifully explores the universal experience of being a kid and wanting to grow up, then looking back in regret. The track features an instrumental break that fills the emptiness of vocals with a new form of storytelling with the instruments intensifying like waves.

Dean has perfectly executed throughout the entire album the feeling of looking out the window into the world she has created, but catching yourself in the reflection.-SELENA SALLAY



Wiles

If You Can Hear Me Now You’re Not Far Enough Away

GOOD STONES//CALM WATER | JANUARY 10, 2025

“You say that you’re a feminist / Well I’m a woman / And you treated me like shit.” The sheer vitriol Vancouver-based alt-rock band

Wiles embeds in this EP is evident from the moment you press play. For the first project ever released by both the group and their recording collective, *good stones // calm water*, the mood setting of *If You Can Hear Me Now You’re Not Far Enough Away* would be impressive for 10-year veterans. Case in point, the project’s intro track “Skipping Town,” whose dirty guitar becomes the introduction, and then the backdrop, to an equally as dirty break up. Matching this energy are the first words we hear from lead singer Kate Cunningham – “I wanna picture you / Dead in a ditch somewhere with / No one around to find you.” Like yes, please go off, and she only continues to do so until the project’s crown jewel. I adore this chorus, and I’ll definitely be adding it to the shower karaoke queue, but honestly it’s the background vocalizations that do it for me. It’s nothing more than holding a single note, but the second singer does so much to add to the feeling of just letting go and running away that I almost want to break up with this guy too. If EPs were purely judged by their intro tracks, I think this one would score near the top.

“Even at age twelve I felt the shame of an Elizabethan bride.” Once again leading with that addicting dirty guitar, “Insides Out” manages to hold up initially with some vivid, though unfortunately too-quiet vocals. I loved both of the song’s short verses, but was admittedly let down by a repetitive pre-chorus lacking the very riff that hooked me in. Fortunately though, the disappointment doesn’t last long, as the title for best instrumentation will definitely be going to its successor, “Dad’s New Apartment.” With an incredibly catchy hook I swear I recognize from somewhere, the melodies on this track feel like an atmospheric fever dream. That feeling when the guitar comes in is magical, and the vocals and instrumentation form such an addicting pair, this track is a very worthy entry into 2025’s most atmospheric songs list.

“I shouldn’t have to be surprised when guys are nice to me,” she remarks on “Half Blind,” sounding straight out of a musical about a surprisingly good one night stand. The lead vocals are,

again, the star of the show, with their welcomed show of emotion and impressive inflections. The two dueling guitars, then, have to be the ear-catching set dressing – though much like every other song in the project, they of course get their own chance to shine. Sadly the same can’t be said for the project’s drums, which feel awkward in most tracks, with their peak sounding fine at best. Conveniently this also describes how I feel about the EP’s penultimate entry, “Last Word,” whose admittedly excellent writing, including this review’s introductory bar, isn’t enough to carry it. It’s by far the weirdest on the project, and while I’m always a fan of experimentation, unfortunately this one just didn’t land for me.

If You Can Hear Me Now You’re Not Far Enough Away brings the listener on a very illustrative journey through the artist’s breakup. As the EP comes to a close, so too do the protagonist’s lingering thoughts about her ex boyfriend. “Variations on a Theme” sees her question her own ability to close this chapter of her life, while the anxious guitar riffs give the scene the tension it deserves. While not the most exciting track, the finale caps off a truly impressive debut project woven with genuine emotionality and captivating writing. At just over 20 minutes, Wiles serves us a taster that I’d recommend to just about anyone – one that makes me very excited for whatever they’re cooking next.-LYLA NATHAN



Magda Baker

One Day I Won’t Love You Anymore

SELF-RELEASED | 2025

Magda Baker may be our local Truman Sinclair. Folk with a subtle art rock twist... can’t really go wrong. Magda Baker has gifted us an EP that is humble and powerful, sorrowful and strong, ringing and rich. *One Day I*

Won’t Love You Anymore is full with stripped tracks spotlighting gritty raw and emotional vocals paired with pulsing and full acoustic guitar.

This is such a bedroom-recorded EP and in the best way. The strum of guitar strings each song brings makes you feel as though you are sitting next to Baker in a comforting room under warm yellow light emotionally invested in the recollections of a breakup, a peek into the artist’s overthinking mind. In this way, the tracks proves familiar and assuring. The recording and simplicity of just two instruments, his voice and guitar, interacting with one another throughout the whole track truly emphasized less is more. Baker’s choices of layered vocals scattered through tracks are expressive, purposeful, and strong, providing fleeting and subtle angst when necessary.

The opening track “I Know What You Were Up To” immediately immerses you into Baker’s world of heartbreak and reflection communicated through poetic lyricism. This track is a taster of the full EP feel; instrumentally minimal but ever engaging and emotionally charged with reverbed vocals cutting with clarity through purposeful acoustic guitar. A distinguishing feature of Baker’s style of layering vocals presents itself for the first time in this opening track. These backing vocals feel as though they are on the horizon of the song reaching to establish themselves, soft and yearning, clearly a support of the lead, but very distinctive and determined in their own way, something that shows itself consistently through the EP.

The following track “The End of the Line” proceeds almost fluidly from the previous track mirroring a similar pulse of strum from the acoustic guitar. This consistency is another distinctive feature of this EP. The mood and emotion are so consistent in this EP, something I really appreciate from an artist. Baker has the ability to take this EP as a blank canvas and create a scene that I never feel removed from beginning to end.

The “Maladaptive Daydream” remains on the wave of this same consistency but highlights a more Hozier feel of Bakers voice, deep and rich. This track is both the longest and most conventionally structured track with the most recognizable and memorable chorus from the EP.

The following track, which also bears the EP’s title “One Day I Won’t Love You Anymore” contrasts from the preceding track. Without a true chorus or definitive structure and sitting at only 1:34 this song shines as the lyrical highlight of the album. Baker’s songwriting skills are completely absorbing both illustratively and poetically. The line “One Day I Won’t Love You

Any more" is only used twice in the song as both the opening and closing line, a strong and artistic choice. Sandwiched between, Baker divulges gracefully in the fresh pain of heartache, but the recognition of healing in the future being trusted and known.

Looking ahead for new releases it would be exciting to see Magda Baker carry this intimate style into fuller arrangement perhaps incorporating drums or other instrumentation to expand on the textures he has already mastered, but this may also be my intense indie rock bias showing through. Still, this EP delivers everything one could hope for from a comforting, guitar driven singer-songwriter release. Baker lays his talent bare in this EP, traversing listeners through a vulnerable and intimate music journey. Staples of the pairing of acoustic guitar and raw vocals with tasteful layering and skillful songwriting, Baker is a talented artist who has impressively solidified a distinctive style. -SONG-AH CLARKE



Scarlet Fever

Girl With Shank

PLAY DEAD | NOVEMBER 01, 2025

My friend taps my shoulder in the crowd at Scarlet Fever's Green Auto show a few months back. "THEY'RE REALLY GOOD!" he shouts into my ear. I nod enthusiastically. He taps my shoulder again. "THEY'RE REALLY GOOD!" he

shouts again, his cadence identical to the first time. So nice he had to say it twice? Infinite praise glitch? Something like that... I say keep 'em coming.

Having been a band since high school, Scarlet Fever has fostered s loyal roots in Vancouver's DIY scene, anchoring themselves in the local music landscape via live performances at venues like Green Auto, Koerner's, and The Pearl. Their debut album is an alt indie-rock and shoegazey release that cups its hands to gather up the beloved and feverishly sought out feeling of watching Scarlet Fever play live.

"girl with shank" body-doubles that in-person feeling in the breaths between songs, especially through two short interludes breaking up the 9-track LP. At just 15 seconds in length, "beth" is a sound bite composed of screeching amp feedback and fuzzy guitar tuning that bleeds seamlessly into the first notes of "get out." The second interlude, "404," is an instrumental morsel that takes off with soft, isolated guitar plucks and slowly builds in light drums and strumming. These glimpses of preparations even appear in the early moments of more vocal-forward tracks - lend an ear to the gentle tuning and cymbal tremors in the opening of "sublime."

Besides being a moment to settle, these pauses within the album emulate the transitions scattered within live performances. The occasional mouthfuls of distorted feedback and tentative tuning come across as an auditory representation of that knowing glance band members share to regroup before falling into the next track.

A few steps into "get out," the song halts into softer instrumentals and almost murmured lyrics: "I could've said better things / And waited for what this brings / You couldn't know how it hurts / When you say what's it worth." The melody quickly picks itself up off of the floor and into gritty shredding and stern, deadpan vocals - the girl with shank of it all.

Having been released as a single first, "gaslight" was the song most prominently on the crowd's lips at the album release show. Grace Caruso, one of the band's guitarists and vocalists, says: "At the end of the day, I wanna make catchy music." High-energy, interspersed with fuzzy guitar riffs and bound by standout vocals, "gaslight" trotted itself off of that vision board and into my head, sticking around for a welcomed stay. So, check!

"We tried our best to encapsulate what it feels like to watch us live, with the LP," says Elsie Iwankow, another of the band's guitarists and vocalists. With that in mind - and the studio recording in my headphones - "THEY'RE REALLY GOOD!" I shout. "THEY'RE REALLY GOOD!" I shout, again, identically. -ALICIA L'ARCHEVÊQUE



REAL LIVE ACTION

Your arms are my cocoon with Anchoress, JISEI, and Coup D'Etat

SEPT. 14, 2025 @ GREEN AUTOBODY

.....

I went to the Your Arms Are My Cocoon Show and I got a wound in my mouth from someone falling on me at high speed in the mosh pit to prove it. This is my sudden reminder to always pay attention to what's going on in the mosh pit. I think it's been a few years since I was put on to Your Arms Are My Cocoon by someone who dm'd me to say that they dreamt I opened for Your Arms Are My Cocoon. That dm request was the catalyst for my appreciation for the band, and although their dream did not come true, it was lovely to see Coup D'etat again after opening for them during Music Waste at The Cobalt this summer. I don't recall who dm'd me but thank you! Maybe our dream can come true the next time they come to town.

It was a pleasure to finally see JISEI live. The energy from the mosh pit during their set was something I've never seen before. Every push and shove in the circle pit, the two people HB strutting when everyone was shy about joining in at first, the classic Headbanging from those outside of the pit, bracing on the edge, ready to push people back in or catch people when they fell to save their force colliding with someone else's. It was refreshing to see, as it seems that people in Vancouver don't really dance at shows, but maybe that's just a scene-dependent thing.



YOUR ARMS ARE MY COCOON – DANI YOUR DARLING

This evening was my introduction to the band Anchoress; what stuck with me was how melodic the set was and how the chords and lyricism really resonated with me. At that point, I was really just taking everything in and living in the moment, avoiding the mosh pit, and trying to stretch my aching legs – my circadian rhythm was kicking in and my only relief of my aches and pains was when the crowd liquidated to changeover. I'll definitely be paying a visit to their discography.

Your Are My Cocoon was sonically so stunning live. I was in awe watching as they blended electronic, lofi, bedroom pop, intricate guitar chords, jazz elements from saxophone chords, and intense screams vocals into a set. Even just watching them tune their instruments and take a break to drink water in between as they were preparing for the next song on their setlist was beautiful to witness. Watching as the set became increasingly more interactive was so sweet as the evening was coming to a close. There were highs from the crowd surfing and mellow moments of emotional intimacy shared amongst the crowd when Tyler began to sing the final songs from the setlist. People embraced each other, got emotional, I think I may have even got a shot where people were sharing a kiss in the background but the photo is too blurry to distinguish – all of this was happening once Tyler left the stage to join the crowd. I am glad to have captured glimpses of this to share for any of the Your Arms Are My Cocoon fans who appreciate physical media <3
–DANI YOUR DARLING

DISCORD MAGAZINE

(we've made it so much easier now.)

For those too tired from the capitalist grind to find it in the wild, have your favourite magazine from CiTR 101.9 FM stuffed into an envelope and delivered straight to your door.

Maybe we'll even put something else fun in there while we're at it. Visit citr.ca/subscribe OR follow the [link in our bio](#).



Vancouver West Anarchist Book Fair

March 19th & 20th, 2026 @ UBC's AMS ATRIUM

Local artists, authors, zinesters, musicians, community organizations, workshop facilitators, revolutionaries, punks, and anyone else screaming out to be heard against the oppression of the world. We are looking for you who embody the weird, wild, and wide alternative culture scene here in Vancouver to table at the third annual March 19th and 20th 2026 Van West Anarchist Bookfair.

- No tabling fees
- 50% of tables reserved for marginalized voices
- Workshop space booking available until February 3rd
- March 19th and 20th in the AMS Nest Lower Atrium from 10am-5pm both days



Email:
vanwestanarchist
bookfair@
gmail.com

CiTR 101.9FM Program Guide

"DISCORDER RECOMMENDS LISTENING TO CITR EVERY DAY." - DISCORDER.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	
6 AM	CiTR GHOST MIX		DEMOCRACY NOW!	CiTR GHOST MIX				6 AM
7 AM	WORDS AND CULTURE	PACIFIC PICKIN'	HARBINGER SHOWCASE	VAZHADHA VAZHKAI	CiTR GHOST MIX	RADIO ART OVERNIGHT	CiTR GHOST MIX	7 AM
8 AM				IN SEARCH OF LOST VENUES CiTR GHOST MIX			FUTURE ECOLOGIES	8 AM
9 AM	BREAKFAST WITH THE BROWNS	QUEER FM	SUBURBAN JUNGLE	HORNY MUSIC	QUEER FM		CLASSICAL CHAOS	9 AM
10 AM		ELECTRONIC INTIFADA		CiTR GHOST MIX	FILM PICNIC	THE SATURDAY EDGE		10 AM
11 AM	CiTR GHOST MIX	GREEN FOREST GROVE	CiTR GHOST MIX	LEENIN WITH JEFF	DISCOLLIE		SHOOKSHOOKTA	11 AM
12 PM	LETHAL REFRESH	BLOW IT UP!	THE SHAKESPEARE SHOW	DUNCAN'S DONUTS	DAVE RADIO PRESENTS THE ECLECTIC LUNCH	CiTR GHOST MIX		12 PM
1 PM		TRAINING TIME	LA BONNE HEURE W. VALIE CiTR GHOST MIX	WHAT'S IN THE HAT (EVERY 2ND THURS) HAIL! DISCORDIA! (EVERY 3RD THURS)	CiTR GHOST MIX		THE ROCKERS SHOW	1 PM
2 PM	PARTS UNKNOWN	CiTR GHOST MIX	JESS'S LIT	SLIMEWIRE	BEPI CRESPLAN PRESENTS... AND NARDWUAR	POWER CHORD		2 PM
3 PM	AMATEUR HOUR CYPHER	UNCEDD AIRWAVES	I COME FROM THE MOUNTAIN	TRAINING TIME LE REETUAL				3 PM
4 PM	SONIC SPILL CLOSE FRIENDS	CiTR GHOST MIX	THE REEL WHIRLED	BORDERS & BLAST BEATS CiTR GHOST MIX	NARDWUAR THE HUMAN SERVIETTE PRESENTS	CODE BLUE	RADIO LATINA MIXXX	4 PM
5 PM	SADDLE & SOUND	IN FLUX IN YOUR COMFORT ZONE	ART BEAT	CiTR GHOST MIX	PACIFIC NOISE WEIRD	MANTRA (BI-WEEKLY) THE ARMAN AND AKHIL SHOW (MONTHLY) CiTR GHOST MIX (MONTHLY)	CiTR GHOST MIX VIVAPORÚ	5 PM
6 PM	SPIT IN YOUR EAR CiTR GHOST MIX	I LUV U HOUR EURO NEURO	KAFOU MUZIK	THE CITARCHIVES SHOW CiTR GHOST MIX		LATE NIGHT TAKE-OUT MEOW MEOW KITTY GIRL KITTY GIRL PURR (MONTHLY)	CiTR GHOST MIX	6 PM
7 PM		CiTR GHOST MIX AFRICA'S LIT	VISUAL MEDIA SAMS-QUANCTH'S HIDEAWAY	AZZUCAR MORENA ANALOG GENMATRIA		CiTR GHOST MIX	BAMU-LADES CiTR GHOST MIX	7 PM
8 PM	EXPLODING HEAD MOVIES		CiTR RADIO ALLSORTS CiTR GHOST MIX	CROWD FLIP (LAST THURS) THE MIX SOUP (LAST THURS) PARDON OUR BOX (LAST THURS) ATTIC JAMES (LAST THURS)	CANADA POST ROCK	CiTR GHOST MIX	TECHNO PROGRESSIVO	8 PM
9 PM		CRIMES & TREASONS					CiTR GHOST MIX	9 PM
10 PM	THE JAZZ SHOW	OFF THE BEAT AND PATH	J CHILLIN	LIVE FROM THUNDERBIRD RADIO HELL	SOCA STORM	SYNAPTIC SANDWICH		10 PM
11 PM				COPY/PASTE	CiTR GHOST MIX			11 PM
12 AM			AFTN SOCCER SHOW	ONE HOUR HAPPY HAPPY FUN TIME MUZIK		RANDOPHONIC	CiTR GHOST MIX	12 AM
1 AM	CiTR GHOST MIX	CiTR GHOST MIX			RADIO ART OVERNIGHT			1 AM
2 AM			CiTR GHOST MIX	CiTR GHOST MIX		THE ABSOLUTE VALUE OF INSOMNIA		2 AM
LATE NIGHT								LATE NIGHT

STUDENT PROGRAMMING

CiTR COLLECTIVE PROGRAMMING

SYNDICATED PROGRAMMING

DO YOU WANT TO PITCH
YOUR OWN SHOW TO CiTR?

EMAIL THE PROGRAMMING MANAGER AT
PROGRAMMING@CiTR.CA TO LEARN HOW

Monday

WORDS AND CULTURE

7AM-8AM, TALK / LANGUAGE

Words and Culture weaves conversations with Indigenous language and knowledge keepers together with music by Indigenous artists. The team creating this original content is made up exclusively of Indigenous producers, hosts and guests. Words and Culture is funded by SiriusXM Canada through the Community Radio Fund of Canada.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

BREAKFAST WITH THE BROWNS

8AM-11AM, ELECTRONIC / EXPERIMENTAL

Every Monday morning since 1988 Breakfast with the Browns has been the place offering a chance to stay in a mood... playing all the best ambient, downtempo, electronic, ASMR, pop-lounge-core music...strictly squareville.

• BREAKFASTWITHTHEBROWNS@HOTMAIL.COM

LETHAL REFRESH

12PM-1PM, CLUB / DANCE

On lethal refresh, we scour the net for the hottest new tracks and send them straight to you. Log on for lethal refresh Mondays 3-4 for tracks that are lethal as freak, refreshed each week.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

PARTS UNKNOWN

1PM-3PM, ROCK/POP/EXPERIMENTAL

Treading water for over 25 years!!!

• CHRISARIFFIC@GMAIL.COM

AMATEUR HOUR

ALTERNATING MON 3PM-4PM, ROCK/ART/DISCUSSION

Interviews with local, amateur, and student musicians about the music they make and the music they love!

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

CYPHER

ALTERNATING MON 3PM-4PM, HIP-HOP/R&B/SOUL

Cypher explores Hip-Hop and the beauty of the Genre specifically in the 90's. Hip-hop is founded on the four elements of DJing, MCing, Breaking, and Graffitiing, which come together to form an entire culture and community.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

SONIC SPILL

ALTERNATING MON 4PM-5PM, LEAKS / FLOODS / SOUNDS

Someone better have brought a mop.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

CLOSE FRIENDS

ALTERNATING THU 4PM-5PM, POP / CULTURE / DISCUSSION

Welcome, all! friendship enthusiasts! Spend time with me (Marisol) and my friends as we share stories, hang out, and reflect on what platonic relationships look like in the 21st century.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

SADDLE & SOUND

5PM-6PM, COUNTRY

Where all-country twang meets real-life tales: Tune into Saddle & Sound for anything but your average counry hour!

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

SPIT IN YOUR EAR

ALTERNATING MONDAYS 6PM, ROCK / POP / INDIE

Presented by the Music Collective of CITR.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

EXPLODING HEAD MOVIES

7PM-8PM, FILM/CULTURE/ECCLECTIC

This one-man variety show profiles music from film, TV & other visual media + songs for a future soundtrack. Spotlights cover composers, genres & ambience; all embracing discovery & ironclad whimsy.

• RADIOFREEGAG@GMAIL.COM

THE JAZZ SHOW

9PM-12AM, JAZZ/RAP

A show about Jazz music with emphasis on authentic Jazz music from various eras, and not any common hybrid styles that leave out essential qualities that define authentic Jazz.

• GAVJAZZY@YAHOO.COM

Tuesday

PACIFIC PICKIN'

6AM-8AM, BLUEGRASS / COUNTRY / OLD-TIME

The best in Bluegrass, Old-Time, Classic Country, Cajun, Rockabilly, Western Swing and whatever jumps off the shelves at us.

• PACIFICPICKIN@YAHOO.COM

QUEER FM

8AM-10AM, TALK/POLITICS

Canada's longest-running 2SLGBTQIA+ radio show. QueerFM Van blends culture, news, music and interviews. Check out Co-Hosts DJ Denise Fraser and Barb Snelgrove every Tuesday/ Friday morning at 8am-10 am (PST) live streaming and podcast at http://bit.ly/QueerFM or listen locally at 101.9FM!

• QUEERFM@RELOADED@GMAIL.COM

ELECTRONIC INTIFADA

10AM-11AM, NEWS

The Electronic Intifada is an independent online news publication and educational resource focusing on Palestine, its people, politics, culture and place in the world.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

GREEN FOREST GROVE

11AM-12PM, BLUEGRASS / EXPERIMENTAL/ART

Down from the smoky hills of Blue Mountain, along Grey Mountain Road, lies Green Forest Grove, the hidden abode of music production.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

BLOW IT UP!

12PM-1PM, TALK/GIVEAWAY

Ticket giveaway hour for the hottest shows happening in Vancouver

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

TRAINING TIME

1PM-2PM, CLASSICAL / JAZZ / ECCLECTIC

1 hour of radio devoted to teaching new programmers about the thrills of being on-air. Tune in to listen to CiTR's newest talent!

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

UNCEDDED AIRWAVES

3PM-4PM, INDIGENOUS STORIES

Hosted by the Indigenous Collective, Unceded Airwaves unveils the hidden pages of Indigenous history and contemporary existence.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

IN FLUX

ALTERNATING TUE 5PM, MUSIC/MOVEMENT

constant state of transition

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

IN YOUR COMFORT ZONE

ALTERNATING TUE 5PM, CULTURE / DISCUSSION / ECCLECTIC

Exploring comfort media and the joy it brings us. Host Matthew Raffin chats with guests about the art, entertainment, and stories that feel cozy like home.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

LUV U HOUR

ALTERNATING TUE 6PM, CRUSH / LOVE <3<3<3

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

EURO NEURO

ALTERNATING TUES 6PM, DISCUSSION / POLITICS / EUROVISION

Euro Neuro is a Eurovision Song Contest show with a recap of the Contest focusing on how the political and social events have been influencing the contest and song entries.

• EURONEURO.CITR@GMAIL.COM

MOZZY'S MORSELS

ALTERNATING TUES 7PM-8PM, TALK/ MUSIC/ELECTRONIC/ROCK

Your one stop shop for tasty tracks and waxing lyrical. Mozzzy's Morsels is a sickeningly self referential collection of Molly Ann Nicholls dearest treasures and memories, and some inconsequential ones too.

• MOLLYANNICHOLLS2@GMAIL.COM

AFRICA'S LIT

ALTERNATING TUES 7PM-8PM, TALK/ WORLD

A journey across the globe to faraway countries and distant times. More than just books, it's an hour of music, interviews and analyses brought together to highlight the best of African Literature.

• AFRICA'S.LIT@GMAIL.COM

CRIMES & TREASONS

8PM-10PM, RAP / CULTURE / SOCIAL JUSTICE

Crimes & Treasons is 2 hours of new uncensored music. Every Tuesday Night at 8pm-10pm PST with hosts Jamal \$teeles and Malik.

• DJ@CRIMESANDTREASONS.COM/ CRIMESANDTREASONS.COM

OFF THE BEAT AND PATH

10PM-11PM, TALK / MUSIC

Host Issa Arrian, introduces you to his various interest through his unique lens. From news, pop culture, to sports, Issa will surely have an interesting take, that is undeniable.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

Wednesday

DEMOCRACY NOW

6AM-7AM, NEWS/SPOKEN WORD

Democracy Now! produces a daily, global, independent news hour hosted by award-winning Journalists Amy Goodman and Juan Gonzalez. Our reporting includes breaking daily news headlines and in-depth interviews with people on the front lines of the world's most pressing issues. On Democracy Now!, you'll hear a diversity of voices speaking for themselves, providing a unique and sometimes provocative perspective on global events.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

HARBINGER SHOWCASE

7AM-8AM, CURRENT AFFAIRS/SOCIAL JUSTICE / CULTURE

Weekly highlights from Canada's #1 coast-to-coast community of politically and socially progressive podcasts including Alberta Advantage, The Breach Show, Tech Won't Save Us, Press Progress Sources & 55 more.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

SUBURBAN JUNGLE

8AM-10AM, ECLECTIC / POP

The Suburban Jungle is a music show focusing on funk, soul, dub, downtempo, electronica and other musical genres.

• DJ@JACKVELVET.NET

THE SHAKESPEARE SHOW

12PM-1PM, ECLECTIC / EVERYTHING

Eclectic, all different genres and eras

• DVM@SHAW.CA

LA BONNE HEURE

ALTERNATING WED 1PM-2PM, ROCK/POP/WORLD

Valie interviews your favourite musicians! It's always a good time on La Bonne Heure - chatting about inspirations and concerts.

Guests include: The Wombats, Men I Trust, Peach Pit & more!

• VALIE@ADEJKA@GMAIL.COM

JESS'S LIT

1PM-2PM, WORDS/ART/LITERATURE

Jess' Lit delves into literatures - songs, poetry, books, movies, etc. - of all genres from a variety of eras, providing analysis, or just a fun time exploring new ideas and works throughout history.

• LEEJESS2002@GMAIL.COM

I COME FROM THE MOUNTAIN

WED 3PM-4PM, SPELLS / WATER / TOOL

the show that doesn't happen on a physical mountain, but it does happen in the mountains of your mind.

• ARTCOORDINATOR@CITR.CA

THE REEL WHIRLED

ED 4PM-5PM, FILM

"The official show of the UBC Film Society. "The Reel Whirled" is a show made by and for film buffs! Hosted by Lily Grove, this show will provide you with your weekly dose of cinematic goodness.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

ART BEAT

5PM-6:30PM, ART / CULTURE / DISCUSSION

The Arts Report, run by CiTR's Arts Collective, focuses on arts and culture in so-called "Vancouver" (and beyond!). Blending reviews, interviews, songs and playful banter, the Arts Report connects listeners to the arts community that CiTR is part of.

• ARTS@CITR.CA

KAFU MUZIK

ALTERNATING WED 6PM-7PM, FRANCO-PHONE / MUSIC

Discover the music of the Francophone World - from Canada to Vietnam. At Kafou Muzik languages, rhythms, and genres of five continents intersect. Produced in collaboration with UBC's Centre de la Francophonie.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

VISUAL MEDIA

ALTERNATING WEDS 7PM-8PM, VISUAL/ MEDIA

TBA

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

CITR RADIO ALLSORTS

ALTERNATING WEDS 8PM-9PM, ECLECTIC

TBA

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

SAMSQUANTCH'S HIDEAWAY

ALTERNATING WED 6:30PM-8PM, ROCK/POP/INDIE

If you're into 90's nostalgia, Anita B's the DJ you for. Don't miss her spins, every Wednesday.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

J CHILLIN

9PM-11PM, TALK/PUNK/RAP/ART

#freeJchillin' ur fav cult classic r'dio show!! nothing happens on this show we just chill literally just shoot the sh/t and listen to music we also we have sick guests n live performances . ONE LOVE . we play everything!!!

• NICKMONIZ@LIVE.CA

AFTN SOCCER SHOW

11PM-1PM, SPORTS / CULTURE / DISCUSSION

A weekly soccer discussion show centered around Vancouver Whitecaps and the game in BC. Established in 2013, it is the longest running English-speaking soccer podcast in Canada.

• AFTN@CANADASHOTMAIL.COM

Thursday

IN SEARCH OF LOST VENUES

ALTERNATING THURS 8AM-9AM, WEIRD CULTURE/LOCAL MUSIC HISTORY

Memories of Vancouver live music venues which no longer exist from the local musicians who played there. Each episode is a walk through a neighbourhood.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

VAZHADHA VAZHKA!

7AM-8AM, TALK/ WORLD/DISCUSSION

The primary focus of the show is to discuss different aspects of Tamil culture and how certain changes can help maintain it. Ultimately, these changes can help prevent cultural loss.

• VAZHADHAVAZHKA@GMAIL.COM

HORNY MUSIC

9AM-10AM, MUSIC/HORNS/ECCLECTIC

Spreading the love for songs with horns in (brass and sax) linked by a different theme each week. Get ready for some aural pleasure.

• HORNYMUSICSHOW@GMAIL.COM

LEENIN WITH JEFF

11AM-12PM, CHILLING/TALK

If you have time to lean you have time to clean.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

DUNCAN'S DONUTS

12PM-1PM, ROCK/POP/EXPERIMENTAL

Sweet treats from the pop underground, since 2006. Hosted by Duncan, fuelled by donuts. "You don't have to be a pro to be on the radio"

• DUNCANSDONUTS@GMAIL.COM

WHAT'S IN THE HAT

MONTHLY THURS 1PM-2PM, CULTURE/ COMEDY/DISCUSSION

Catch What's in the Hat?, where people with disabilities lead lively games and deep conversations. Each episode offers refreshing takes to some of life's biggest questions. Tune in for genuine moments and unexpected surprises!

• HANNAH.NOLAN@POSABILITIES.CA

HAIL! DISCORDIA!

MONTHLY 1PM-2PM, ART / CULTURE / DISORDER

Hail! Discordia! is an audio translation of Disorder Magazine. Every third Thursday Izzy and Zoie spend an hour covering themes/submissions from the recent Disorder publication.

• ISABELLE.WHITTALL13@GMAIL.COM

SLIMEWIRE

2PM-3PM, WEIRD/ECCLECTIC/LGBTQIA2+

GLOBAL SLIME SYNDICATE MASQUERADING AS RADIO PROGRAMMING. TRAVEL WITH US TO THE VERY FRONTIER OF AURAL CONSCIOUSNESS. PLAYING EVERY PICE OF MUSIC EVER WRITTEN.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

LE REETUAL

ALTERNATING THU 3PM-4PM, MUSIC

Do you live and breathe music? On Le Reetual you can dive deep into different musical universes through new categories every episode. Tune in every other Wednesday at 1:00pm for an hour of the best DJ hosts in the world!

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

TRAINING TIME

ALTERNATING THU 3PM-4PM, CLASSICAL / JAZZ / ECCLECTIC

1 hour of radio devoted to teaching new programmers about the thrills of being on-air. Tune in to listen to CiTR's newest talent!

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

BORDERS & BLASTBEATS

ALTERNATING THU 4PM-5PM, BORDERS/ BLASTBEATS

probably loves metal and hates ICE.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

CITARCHIVES SHOW

ALTERNATING THURS 6PM-7PM, CULTURE/ARTS

Hosted by Sophie Diebold, the CiTArchives show explores the depths of CiTR and Disorder's archives and the treasure found within

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

AZZUCAR MORENA

ALTERNATING THU 7PM-8PM, MUSIC / TALK

Latin culture, migrant experiences, artist support and music.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

ANALOG GEMATRIA

ALTERNATING THU 7PM-8PM, ECLECTIC

gematria is the practice of assigning numerical values to words- probably developed by ancient greeks. much as a playlist consists of each of its parts (a song), each letter of these words have meaning unto themselves in gematrial calculations.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

CROWD FLIP

MONTHLY THUR 8PM-9PM,INDIE / ROCK / QUEER

Crowd Flip is both a talk and music show that began by exploring musicology theory through a critical lens of gender theory and history.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

THE MIXSOUP

MONTHLY THUR 8PM-9PM, ELECTRONIC/ EXPERIMENTAL/REGIONAL

Dune presents a monthly music show inspired by his travels - The Mixsoup, a healthy broth for your ear bones. The Mixsoup is a journey through space, genre and time, featuring artists from independent music scenes from around the globe.

• DAVID@DUNEASDUNE.BE

PANDORA'S BOX

MONTHLY THUR 8PM-9PM, MEDIA/ CULTURE/MYTHOLOGY

Come with us as we dive into mythologies & folktales from around the world, and unbox their unexpected connections with contemporary art, music, media and cultural phenomena!

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

ATTIC JAMS

MONTHLY THUR 8PM-9PM,EVERYTHING

Attic Jams unearths an eclectic treasure trove of sounds-vintage gems, hidden grooves, and unexpected beauty. A genre-blurring journey through music's attic.

• SARA_C@SHAW.CA

LIVE FROM THUNDERBIRD RADIO HELL

9PM-11PM, ROCK/POP/PUNK

Thunderbird Radio Hell features live band(s) every week performing in the comfort of the CiTR lounge. Most are from Vancouver, but sometimes

bands from across the country and around the world are nice enough to drop by to say hi.

• PROGRAMMING@CITR.CA

COPY/PASTE

11PM-12AM, ELECTRONIC / EXPERIMENTAL

enter a zone and never return, vibe music for dreamers and dancers. syndicated on CiTR and n10.as radio, podcast available on apple podcasts.

• TIM@ACT

CiTR 101.9 FM CHARTS

november 2025

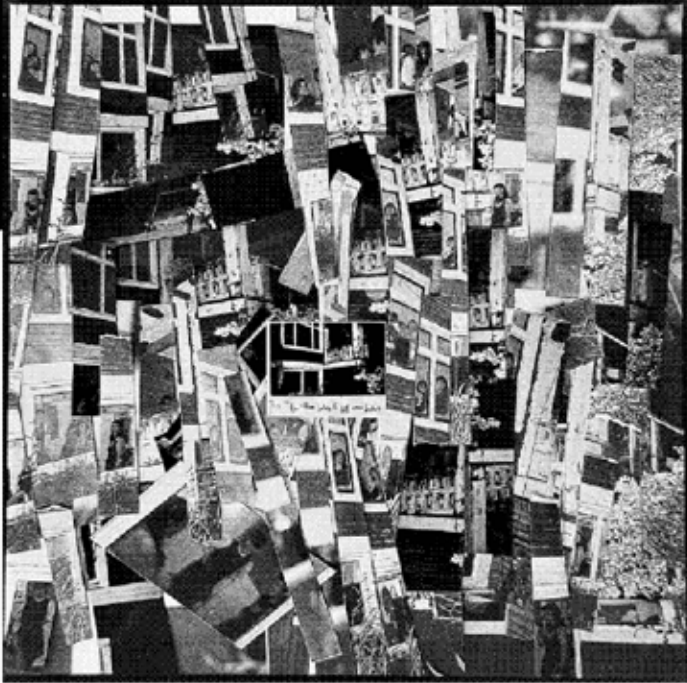
#	ARTIST	ALBUM	LABEL
1	tonk*+	Wildflower	GREEN AUTO
2	Yawn*+	wish i could've	SELF-RELEASED
3	No Joy*	Bugland	HAND DRAWN DRACULA
4	Dominique Adams*	To Keep	BIRTHDAY CAKE
5	TOPS*	Bury the Key	GHOSTLY
6	Whispering City*	Whispering City	SELF-RELEASED
7	Bill Leeb*+	Machine Vision	METROPOLIS
8	SSIK*+	Inferior Health	NEON TASTE
9	Laura Groves	Yes	BELLA UNION
10	Doozy*+	Zombie Ant Fungus	SELF-RELEASED
11	bananahaus*+	grounders	MONO TAPES
12	Hussain Bokhari*+	Possessions	MOOD HUT
13	Ida Diana Maidstone*	Angel Food	SELF-RELEASED
14	747*	Pacific Spirit	AQUAREGIA
15	CORBEN*+	Transmitter	HOTHAM SOUND
16	Sound Effects*+	No Songs Yet	SELF-RELEASED
17	Absolute Treat*	Shattered Love	VICTORY POOL
18	Garden of Magic*	Sensations	SELF-RELEASED
19	Ada Lea*	when i paint my masterpiece	NEXT DOOR
20	Citizenry*	Citizenry	SAFE SOUNDS
21	Joane Héту*	Elle a son mot à dire	DAME
22	Naoki Zushi	Paradise	WORLD OF ECHO
23	niloo*	Sour Cherry	SELF-RELEASED
24	TDJ*	TDJ	COLLECTION DISQUES DURS
25	Georgia Harmer*	Eye of the Storm	ARTS & CRAFTS
26	Garden Dog*	Antidepresso Espresso	SELF-RELEASED
27	A Singular Berry*	STROGEN HORSE	SELF-RELEASED
28	Dragnet	Dragnet Reigns!	SPOILSPORT
29	Beau Wheeler*+	Trans	PONCHO
30	Tectonic Sound	Tectonic Recordings	TECTONIC RECORDINGS
31	Ioscil*+	Lake Fire	KRANKY
32	njk	Algorithmic Accompaniment	STROOM.TV
33	Myagi*	The World Of Tomorrow	POP AND LOCK
34	Birth Order	Albatross	THE GHOST IS CLEAR
35	Catu Diosis	Anyim	HAKUNA KULALA
36	rRoxymore	Juggling Dualities	IK7
37	Tsimka & Michael Red*	Debut	SELF-RELEASED
38	Adrian Sherwood	The Collapse Of Everything	ON-U SOUND
39	Cass McCombs	Interior Live Oak	DOMINO
40	Perséide*	Passages secrets	SELF-RELEASED
41	Alex Rake and the Leaves*	6 or 7 Songs	SELF-RELEASED
42	Roundelays*+	Regional Romantic	SELF-RELEASED
43	Florist	Jellywish	DOUBLE DOUBLE WHAMMY
44	Horsegirl	Phonetics On and On	MATADOR
45	Djrum	Under Tangled Silence	HOUNDSTOOTH
46	Disembodiment*	Spiral Crypts	EVERLASTING SPEW
47	Drainolith*	Macbeth	SELF-RELEASED
48	QUITAPENAS	¡Retumba!	NEPLANTLA
49	Negative Charge*	Negative Charge	NEON TASTE
50	Blue Pony*+	For A Few Demos More	SELF-RELEASED
show me your moves			

CiTR's charts reflect what's been played most on air over the last month. Artists with asterisks (*) are Canadian and those marked plus (+) are local. To submit music for air-play on CiTR 101.9FM, please send a physical copy addressed to Aisia Witteveen Music Director at CiTR 101.9FM, LL500 6133 University Blvd., Vancouver BC, V6T1Z1. Though we prioritize physical copies, feel free to email download codes to hello@cit.ca. You can follow up with the Music Director 1-2 weeks after submitting.



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UPCOMING SHOWS IN VANCOUVER!

December 4

ALASKA

Rickshaw Theatre

December 6

VINCENT LIMA

Hollywood Theatre

January 13

CITY OF THE SUN

Fox Cabaret

January 15

STEVE GUNN

Fox Cabaret

January 23

KITTIN

Industrial 236

January 29

AUSTRA

Rickshaw Theatre

February 7

SAMM HENSHAW

Fortune Sound

February 10

VENNA

Fortune Sound

February 23

CAT POWER

Commodore Ballroom

February 28

ROMARE DJ SET

Hollywood Theatre

March 2

SPILL TAB

Fox Cabaret

March 11

INDIGO DE SOUZA

Hollywood Theatre

March 23

RUNO PLUM

Fox Cabaret

March 24

DREAM, IVORY

Wise Hall

March 30

EVAN HONER

Commodore Ballroom

April 4

MIND ENTERPRISES

Fortune Sound

April 10

COURTNEY MARIE ANDREWS

Biltmore Cabaret

April 25

THE WEDDING PRESENT

Wise Hall

Tickets & more info:
timbreconcerts.com

